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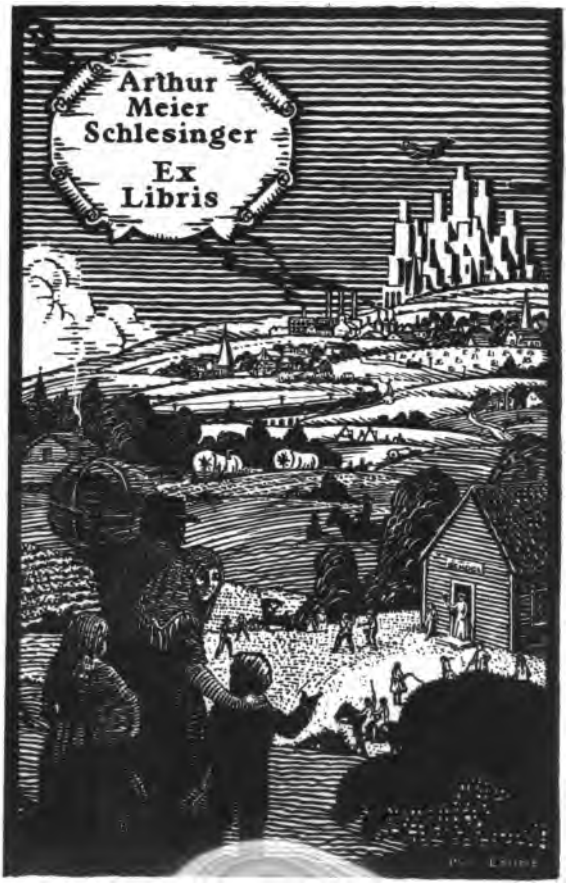
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THE

UPPER TEN THOUSAND.

BY

C. ASTOR BRISTED.

NEW-YORK:
STRINGER & TOWNSEND, 222 BROADWAY.
M.DCCC.LII.

ASHBURNER'S INTRODUCTION TO BENSON.

THE

UPPER TEN THOUSAND:

SKETCHES

OF

AMERICAN SOCIETY.

BY

C. ASTOR BRISTED.

Second Edition, Revised.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE publishers of this edition of "The Upper Ten Thousand," violate no privacy or courtesy in placing upon the title-page the name of Mr. CHARLES ASTOR BRISTED, as these brilliant sketches of American Society were not only generally attributed to him from the commencement of their publication in Fraser's Magazine, but were publicly acknowledged to be his in a letter to N. P. Willis, on the appearance of the sixth of the series. The London impression from which we print has the following preface:

Reader, the mere mention of Americans is probably associated in your mind with much that is wild, savage, and frightful,—sanguinary duels, Lynch law, nigger babies boiled for breakfast, swamps and yellow fever; in short, a pleasing and promiscuous mess of "a' things

horrible and awful." Or if, through some Whiggish leaning, or large feeling of fraternity for all the Anglo-Saxon race, you are disposed to stand up for your Transatlantic brethren, you will panegyrize them much in the same way that Rousseau and others have maintained the superiority of savage over civilized life. You will say, "These people are inferior to us in the graces and courtesies of civilization, but they are more frank, more natural; fashion exercises no capricious tyranny over them; there is no room there for servility or luxury." Doubtless, then, you will be surprised when, in presenting you to American society, I introduce you among a set of exquisites,—daintily-arrayed men, who spend half their income on their persons, and shrink from the touch of a woollen glove,—who are curious in wines and liquors, and would order a dinner against the oldest frequenter of the Trois Frères; delicate and lovely women, who wear the finest furs and roll in the most stylish equipages,—who are well up in all the latest French dances and the newest French millinery,—who talk very much such English as you do yourself, and three or four Continental languages into the bargain. And, moreover, in comparing English and American merits (for, knowing something about both Mr. Bull and Master Jonathan, belonging partly to both and loving both, I would rather compare their merits than their faults), I

should say that the American was more successful in the minor elegancies and amusements, and the Englishman in the more solid and domestic virtues of life. Now if you grow incredulous, and conclude that I am trying to quiz you, or going to write about America without ever having been there, even *that* is no more than Englishmen have done before, ay, and turned out a big volume, and made "tin" by it, and been praised by "the Thunderer" for accuracy and fidelity of description. But, in sober earnest, I am writing about what I see and know. If, then, I tell you nothing about aligators, or regulators, or any such wild animals, it is simply because I have never met with any; nor that I think it much loss to either of us, for, sooth to say, we have lately had enough of this bowie-knife school of writing, which after all is much as if one were to go to the wilds of Connaught, or the dens of St. Giles's, to collect materials for "A Country Residence in England" or "London and the Londoners." Suspend your opinion, then, or at least your incredulity; open your eyes and shut your mouth, and see what the Yankee will send you.

This is a characteristic of the author, and was a sufficient introduction to the English reader; but it seems to us not improper, in an edition to be offered to the society whose peculiarities it illus-

trates, to add the letter to which we have referred, induced by an intimation in the "Home Journal," that under the name of "Carl Benson," the writer designed a portraiture of himself.

To N. P. Willis, Esq.

My Dear Sir:—Several intimations to the above effect have already reached me, but now for the first time from a source deserving notice. Allow me to deny, *in toto*, any intention of describing myself under the name of Henry Benson. Were I disposed to attempt self-glorification, it would be under a very different sort of character. Here I should, in strictness, stop: but as you have done me the honor to speak favorably of certain papers in *Fraser*, perhaps you will permit me to intrude on your time (and your readers', if you think it worth while), so far as to explain *what* (not *whom*) Mr. Benson is meant for.

The said papers (ten in all, of which four still remain in the editor's hands), were originally headed, 'The Upper Ten Thousand,' as representing life and manners in a particular set, which title the editor saw fit to alter into 'Sketches of American Society'—not with my approbation, as it was claiming for them more than they contained, or professed to contain. Harry Benson, the thread employed to hang them together, is a sort of

fashionable hero—a *quadratus homo*, according to the 'Upper Ten' conception of one: a young man who, starting with a handsome person and fair natural abilities, adds to these the advantages of inherited wealth, a liberal education, and foreign travel. He possesses much general information, and practical dexterity in applying it, great world-knowledge and *aplomb*, financial shrewdness, readiness in composition—speaks half-a-dozen languages, dabbles in literature, in busines, *in every thing but politics*—talks metaphysics one minute, and dances the polka the next—in short, knows a little of every thing, with a knack of reproducing it effectively; moreover, is a man of moral purity, deference to women and hospitality to strangers, which I take to be the three characteristic virtues of a New-York gentleman. On the other hand, he has the faults of his class strongly marked—intense foppery in dress, general Sybaritism of living, a great deal of Jack-Brag-ism and show-off, mythological and indiscreet habits of conversation, a pernicious custom of sneering at every body and every thing, inconsistent blending of early Puritan and acquired Continental habits, occasional fits of recklessness breaking through the routine of a worldly-prudent life. The character is so evidently a type—even if it were not designated as such in so many words, more than once—that it is surprising it should ever have been attributed

to an individual—above all, to one who is never at home but in two places—outside of a horse and inside of a library. Most of the other characters are similarly types—that is to say, they represent certain styles and varieties of men. The fast boy of Young America (from whose diary Pensez-y gave you a leaf last summer), whose great idea of life is dancing, eating supper after dancing, and gambling after eating supper; the older exquisite, without fortune enough to hurry brilliantly on, who makes general gallantry his amusement and occupation; the silent man, *blazé* before thirty, and not to be moved by any thing (a variety of American much overlooked by strangers, but existing in great perfection, both here and at the south); the beau of the 'second set,' dressy, vulgar and good-natured; these and others I have endeavored to depict. Now, as every class is made up of individuals, every character representing a class must resemble some of the individuals in it, in some particulars; but if you undertook to attach to each single character one and the same living representative, you would soon find each of them, like Mrs. Malaprop's Cerberus, 'three gentlemen at once,' if not many more; and should one of your 'country readers,' anxious to 'put the right names to them,' address—not *one*, but, *five* or *six*—of his 'town correspondents,' he would get answers about as harmonious as if he had consulted the same number of German

commentators on the meaning of a disputed passage in a Greek tragedian. Some of the personages are purely fanciful—for instance, Mr. Harrison—such a man as never did exist, but I imagine might very well exist, among us. But, as the development of these characters is still in manuscript, it would be premature to say more of them.

Yet one word. The sketches were written entirely for the English market, so to speak, without any expectation of their being generally read or republished here. This will account for their containing many things which must seem very flat and common-place to an American reader—such as descriptions of sulkies and trotting-wagons, how people dress, and what they eat for dinner, etc.; which are nevertheless not necessarily uninteresting to an Englishman who has not seen this country. Excuse me for trespassing thus far on your patience, and believe me, dear sir, yours very truly,

C. A. Bristed.

CHAPTER I.

THE THIRD AVENUE IN SLEIGHING TIME.

A HEAVY snow in Broadway! The house-tops are all iced over like so many big holiday cakes. The ugly telegraph posts that suggest to the occupants of the second floors the idea of an execution perpetually about to take place under their windows, are not destitute of the same tempting white covering; and high up in the gutters are piled heaps of the plentifully dispensed commodity—so high, that in places the foot-passengers can hardly see over them. But on the causeway (*Americanicè*, 'side-walk') the feet of pedestrians, and in the middle of the street the hoofs of horses and the runners of sleighs, have packed down the smoothest and sweetest of all 'metal' for roads into a hard pavement three or four inches thick, of a dirty dun hue. Out of doors it is cold, but pleasantly cold,—brisk, exhilarating, sparkling—as if an extra quantity of electricity (and is it not really so?) were abroad in the atmosphere. This sensation is particularly observable during a snow-storm, and renders it absolutely agreeable to walk in one, until the insidious moisture begins to penetrate your garments; but both before and after the actual fall it is plainly perceptible, nor is it now unaided by the musical accompaniment of the sleigh-bells. Every thing feels the in-

fluence, and goes a-head accordingly. Men shuffle and slip along in their India-rubber overshoes at a five-miles-the-hour pace. Boys half sliding, half running, with skates suspended on arm, are hurrying to the nearest ice-ponds, or other temporary skating-ground they know of: and sleighs are swarming up and down the street, of all sorts and sizes, from the huge omnibus with its thirty passengers, that lumbers along behind four or six horses, some trotting, and some cantering under great pressure of whip, to the light, gaily-painted cutters, with their solitary fur-capped tenants, their embroidered bear-skin robes flaunting down behind, and their iron-mouthed-lightning-footed pacers, that seem to draw them entirely by the bit, so slender and all but invisible is the attaching harness. And every now and then passes a family party, a little red or blue about the noses, but very jolly for all that; beautiful girls buried in furs, and glancing from under their wrappings with demure looks of mischief, as if the bells rang for them the tune 'I'm owre young to marry yet;' lots of children, who have always an intense appreciation of the fur; a tall black coachman, all alive to the dignity and responsibility of his position; the large and roomy sleigh decked with buffalo* and black bear and grey lynx robes, red-riband-bound and furnished with sham eyes and ears, so that the carriage resembles a portable menagerie; while the gallant

* It would be as pedantic in America to call this animal *bison*, as to speak of 'the earth bringing the sun into view,' for 'the sun rising.' 'Buffalo' is often used independently for 'buffalo robe,' whence they tell a good story of two Englishmen just arrived in Boston. They ordered a sleigh, having heard of such a thing in a general way, without being conversant with the particulars of it. Will you have one buffalo or two?' asked the hostler. 'Why,' says Cockney, looking a little frightened, 'we'll have only one the first time, *as we're not used to driving them.*'

horses, curbed with their heads well out from the pole, are stepping twelve miles an hour, and ready to keep up that pace for half the day. The Londoner, who in his complacency brags of the carriages and horses of his native city as the finest in the world, should go to New-York to learn wisdom in coach-horse-flesh. There he would see many a pair sold for six hundred dollars that a duke would be glad to get for as many guineas. You can scarcely find a carriage-horse that is not a beauty; and they exhibit all varieties of beauty, from the blood-chestnut colt, a-fire in every muscle, yet gentle and tractable amid a crowd of vehicles, to the heavy grey, sixteen-and-a-half hands high, firm as a statue, travelling on with a majestic action and a steady pace. A lover of the noble animal on arriving here congratulates himself on having reached the paradise of horses and horsemen, until he resides long enough to require a mount when the mystery is explained. He finds that all the best horses in the country are trained to harness, and that a good saddle beast is for a gentleman the work of months to find,—for a lady, a very phœnix.

But there is one particular sleigh to which I must direct your attention—though, indeed, you would be likely to notice it without my doing so, as it sweeps round from one of the side streets, for its style and equipments are in some respects unique. The body is a sea-green shell, not answering exactly to any known species, extant or fossil, but carved out of wood, after a fantastic pattern, something between a scallop and a nautilus, evincing considerable imagination on the part of the designer or builder. And you can see the owner is proud of the idea; for, while all the other sleighs that pass are so hung behind with bear or buffalo robes that you can scarcely discern the color, much less the

shape of their bodies, this one, to show off its peculiar form, and also perhaps to do justice to its crimson velvet lining, has no back-robe at all, the black bear being placed in front, instead of the ordinary wild-cat or wolf lap-skin. The runners are a pale straw-colour; the harness, which is rather more elaborate than usual for a one-horse sleigh, is adorned with silver crests, and the double-plated bells (suspended by a band of red leather, which encircles the body just behind the saddle of the collar) are acorns instead of the customary walnut pattern. The horse is not exactly such an one as a London exquisite might select for his cab; he has neither commanding stature nor clambering step, finely-arched neck, nor grackfully sweeping tail; but he is 'all horse, what there is of him,' and his points irreproachable for a roadster. He is a dark bay, fifteen hands and a half high, with the compact figure, chunky neck, powerful fore-arm, and projecting hip of a trotter, and he steps fair and square in his gait, without a pause or a hitch anywhere, as a gentleman's trotter should. The portion of the turn-out most open to criticism is the groom, an unmistakable Pat. He has on a Parisian hat, probably a second-hand one of his master's; an old pair of fashionably-cut trousers, most likely derived from the same source; a white cravat; and a coachman's greatcoat of dark blue cloth, with huge plated buttons and a crest on them. Such make-shift liveries may be seen all along Broadway on fine days, marring the appearance of the otherwise perfect equipages that congregate before Stewart's, the Howell and James of Gotham. When some enterprising imitators of European customs first introduced liveries, there was a great outcry against them on the part of the sovereign people. They were hooted out of Boston, and remain banished to this day. In New-

York the hatband has gained a partial and the button a general footing, but the plush has not been able to keep its ground; so that the servants' costume presents a walking allegory of society, part English form and deference, part French affectation and dandyism, part native independence and outward equality.

The sleigh stops before a house in the upper part of Broadway. Broadway was once the fashionable place of residence, as it still is the fashionable promenade, and most of the city magnates lived in it; but the progress of business northward crowded them out, and their dwelling-houses became shops, till, throughout its three miles of extent, from the Battery to Union Place, scarcely a private residence remains, except in the most northerly half-mile, which still partly sustains its claim to be in the fashionable quarter of the town. Even here the dwellings are interspersed with shops; elegant mansions are beginning to be elbowed by dentists and boarding-houses, and to assume an appearance of *having been* in the aristocratic precincts. Such is the house in question; but, though hard pressed by a business neighbourhood, it is still evidently the residence of a man of wealth and position. What is more remarkable, two or three garden lots are attached to it, and the garden and shrubbery form a marked break in the line of regularly-built four-story houses above and below. This is certainly a phenomenon in an American city, where a man will sip Cordon Bleu and Latour every day, or buy two hundred dollar handkerchiefs for his wife, or pay a fancy price for a fast trotter; but to lose the interest on a town lot by making a garden of it, is an extravagance not to be thought of.

Two young men come out of the house. The first stands five feet ten (in his boots, which help him an

inch), and is, probably, not a bad-looking fellow to begin with. At any rate, whatever he may be by nature, he has made the most of himself by art, being got up like a picture with a fine eye to effect and contrast. He has a very white overcoat, with a white velvet collar and large white silk buttons, and very black pantaloons (*Anglicè*, trousers), chequered with a white bar, so ambitious in its dimensions, that there is not more than a square and a half of the figure on each leg, said legs not being very large. For a muffler he wears a red India scarf, leaving a little aperture under the knot at the throat to let us have a glimpse of the diamond pin that fastens his red and black satin long cravat. His black hair is as glossy and neat as a woman's, and his moustache, which not being so old as his hair by twenty years is considerably lighter, has been brought up to a corresponding sable by some skilfully applied dye, so as to set off to the best advantage the clear red and white of his complexion. Even through those thick white buckskin gloves and heavy cork-soled boots you may see that his extremities are delicately small; and even through the carefully buttoned sack-coat you may notice that his figure is more slender in the waist and hollow in the back than you would have expected from his height, judging him by an English standard. His head is protected by a rich otter-skin cap, nearly as tall as a hat. The front and ear-pieces are turned up, and it is set rather jauntily on one side; but should the day prove too cold he can bury his features in it, till only the tip of his nose is exposed. That is Harry Benson, a young man of the exclusives, rejoicing in nothing to do and ten thousand a-year (dollars, not pounds) to spend. He has not long returned from his travels, and next week is to marry one of the most beautiful women in the city. She has just attained her majority, and he is just twenty-three.

His companion is about ten years older, though he might be any age, from twenty-five to forty, so far as his face shows, being one of those dark, wiry men, who retain the same appearance for fifteen or twenty years, and make up for looking like old men in their youth by looking like young men in their middle age. Not that Tibbets Schuyler the broker is an ugly man; on the contrary, he is rather handsome—decidedly handsome, we might call him, according to the American type of men. He stands six feet two in his boots, and weighs barely one hundred and fifty pounds, great coat and all. His hair and whiskers are jet black, his features regular and well-proportioned (except that his nose is a trifle long), and his dark eyes keen and expressive. If you were told that he was a jolly good fellow and a trump, there is nothing in his countenance to belie it; if you were told that he would take in his own father for sixpence, there is nothing in his countenance to belie that either: one thing only you would infer immediately and correctly, that it is no easy matter to take *him* in. His features, we have said, are good, but his face is of a uniform sallow tint, without freshness or colour. In this dyspeptic countenance, in the lines about his mouth and the absence of a moustache, you read the young man of business, who works hard and lives high, smokes abundantly, and, though too frugal of time to indulge in after-dinner or midnight revelries, has a pernicious habit of taking small drinks in the morning. These men present a singular contrast and combination of strength and weakness. They can work at their desks all day for days together; they walk like locomotives when they do walk; are impervious to the intoxicating effects of any known liquor; and though generally prudent enough to keep out of a row, acquit themselves manfully if ever

caught in one. But they are continually bilious, dyspeptic, and altogether seedy; are subject to rheumatism and other venerable disorders, require strong excitement to amuse them, and know little of that every-day enjoyment of mere animal existence which a man derives from good health and consequent cheerful spirits. Of course Schuyler is not an exquisite. His drab great-coat is a real working, travelling garment, with plenty of pockets, and no superfluous ornament in the way of cording, velvet, or buttons. His pantaloons (as he would call them) are an old black pair that have already done duty for dress as long as they were presentable, for evening parties; his hat is not of the newest, and his neck is defended by a blue worsted comforter. Yet are none of these things put on carelessly, but with the air of a man who had been fashionably dressed when younger, and may be again when richer. His tastes now, however, are certainly not fashionable, nor can they be called literary. In the evening—if it is not the night before packet-day, or no other business call interposes—he patronizes Burton's theatre or the Ethiopian Singers; and at three in the afternoon, when his office and the banks are shut, and his day's work generally through, he reads the papers (the usual extent of his reading), if the weather is unfavourable; if it is fine he drives a trotter, or rather assists at the driving of one. For he does not keep a 'fast crab' now himself; he is too intent on making a fortune, in the pursuit of which he has missed fire once already. No, he goes out driving with one and another of his friends, and in this way partially gets the interest of his earlier investments in horseflesh.

And now the two friends are in the quaint little machine, filling the shell body full to overflowing, so that the bronzed railing which runs round the top of the back

seems very necessary to keep one or both of them from being canted out; Schuyler coils his long legs under him, the bear-skin is tucked in on both sides, 'Ke-ip, Charlie!' and the sleigh glides off at a five minute pace.

It is a nice position altogether, that of Benson. Take a young man, handsome and clever enough to make him courted by others, and on very good terms with himself, in exuberant health (for Harry has not been home long enough to lose his fresh tint and grow dyspeptic), comfortably off in point of 'tin' for the present, and rich in anticipation and imagination for the future, in all the flush and exultation of a rapid, fervent, and successful courtship, and all his other delights swallowed up in the delight of reflecting that a witty and beautiful woman is soon to be his—put him into a well-appointed sleigh, and let an indefatigable trotter take him along eleven or twelve miles an hour, with the potentiality of nearly doubling that speed, and as he glides away musing on all his good luck, it would be a hard case if he were not happy and thankful.

Yet why is not his ladye-love with him? Poor girl, it is so near the time that half her mornings are spent in consultation with dress-makers, and the accepted one is postponed to the milliner. But he has the memory of her last ineffable smile in his heart, and feels content. Schuyler looks amiable too. His are not the rosy visions and golden dreams of Benson, the pleasant realities rivalled by more pleasant anticipations; but he is thinking of the good hit he made in government sixes last week, and how comfortable the sleigh is.

'Why, you might go to sleep in this, Harry,' says the broker, who has just settled down into the position that affords perfect support to his back, and is lying coiled up like a sea-serpent in repose.

Not the beginning of an answer from the other, who is dreaming of *that smile*, no doubt. The horse, meanwhile, seems to be taking care of himself. Having no winkers, he sees his own way and keeps a look-out, not only before but behind him. Were a hand lifted or a handkerchief exhibited by his driver, he would take it for a signal to be off, and would be off like a hurricane accordingly. And therefore is the cherry-handled whip kept completely out of his sight, lying in the hollow between Benson's side and the side of the sleigh, with the top sticking out behind under Harry's right arm, and appearing to grow out of his pocket. Few trotters will bear even the sight of the whip—at least not till half tired. A man usually wants all his hands to hold them to their trot.

'That's really a nice animal,' says Schuyler, at last. He has hit the right topic to arouse his friend, who immediately begins to show signs of returning consciousness.

'Yes, Charley *is* a good horse. But I am not quite sure that he is now at the work he is best fit for. I rode him the other day and found he had the remains of a real canter, and all his paces were so good under the saddle that I think of devoting him to that purpose after this snow is over. He is not fast enough for harness.'

'How fast?'

'Three seventeen with two in a wagon.'

'But he is young.'

'Seven.'

'A horse does not fairly begin to trot till nine or ten. I wouldn't give up my original purpose. But we are out too early to test his speed against anything. It is only just past two.' (He has taken a half-holiday to-day on the strength of its being his birth-day.)

'Exactly the reason I came out so early. I don't want to race him, at least on the out-road. He has been in the stable for two days, and is too free to trot. We will go to Yorkville at an exercise gait, and then turn.'

While thus talking they have left Broadway, and, turning to the right, have passed through Lafayette Place, a short, wide street, with a marble colonnade on one side and large brick and granite mansions on the other. Another turn to the right brings them into the Bowery, the great democratic, as Broadway is the great aristocratic, thoroughfare. It is a wider and straighter street, but the houses have a very different appearance. Markets, butchers' stalls, and secondhand furniture shops, abound in it. Leaving this not very interesting ground they shoot transversely into the Third Avenue, which, however, for the first five minutes, presents nearly the same features, till at the distance of a mile from their starting-point it begins to assume its proper characteristics.

The Third Avenue has been ever since it was made, that is to say for twenty years, the exercise and trial ground of all the fast trotters and pacers in the city. It runs about a mile in town to the end of the 'stones' or pavement, and nearly five miles out of town to Harlaem Bridge. In these five miles of road there are just as many hills, not steep, but gradual, and pretty equally distributed, so that every third or quarter of a mile presents a different level; and in every mile you have the alternation of ascent, descent, and level ground. At the top and bottom of each hill are several taverns, at which the horses may rest and their masters 'take a horn;' but more of these establishments are at the foot than at the summit, as it is the custom of the 'fast

crabs' to make a brush *down* the hill after ascending it leisurely. Besides the taverns, the only houses along the road are blacksmiths' and coachmakers', so that if you break a tier or lose a shoe you may be set to rights on the spot. The avenue is wide, and in good order. The middle of it is Macadamised, the sides are left in soft earth for the benefit of the trotters, whose feet would be broken to pieces by hard pavement at their rate of going. These distinctions are now, of course, obliterated by the snow.

From three till dark the fast horses and fast men are in their glory here. It is too early for them yet, as Schuyler said; there are only family or omnibus sleighs out, so Charley keeps on at one steady pace, without pulling very much, as there is nothing alongside to worry him. In fifteen minutes they are at Yorkville, a small and not over-clean suburb, inhabited chiefly by Irish, and here there are more taverns than ever. Benson does not stop at any; his horse needs no rest, and it is not altogether *comme il faut* to do so: but he has a word to say about some of them in passing.

'Wintergreen's is clearly the pet stopping-place now,' he observes, glancing towards a white house on the highest ground in Yorkville. The long, low, white shed near it is tenanted, even at this early hour, by twenty or more cutters, whose owners are tippling inside.

'A queer fellow Wintergreen is, too! When sober (those are the mornings when he comes to sell you a horse) he behaves like a gentleman, and if he were put into a decent suit might almost pass for one. When drunk, which he is invariably at night, and frequently at noon, he is the beastliest of buffoons, and the fancy men use him for their court-jester. His father was rich once;

he had money himself and good prospects when a youth, and might have done well.'

'Yes,' says Schuyler, with an ironical smile, 'he might have gone through college, travelled in Europe, learned the polka, and been one of us.'

There are two miles more to Harlaem Bridge, but Benson suddenly determines to go back. Perhaps his fingers are a little cold. 'Let us turn here,' and round sweeps the sleigh. Charlie begins to bear on the bit. Benson is far from dreaming now. All his energies are concentrated on his horse, who is a handful on the home-road.

'Now we shall see them to the best advantage as they meet us.'

'I must confess I should like one race, just to beat something before going in. I'm sure your horse is faster than you think him.'

'Well, if anything comes along to give us a fair chance we *will* have a race. See, here comes a batch from the city already, all doing their best to be first at Wintergreen's.'

Here they come, sure enough! First advances an old black pacer, that looks only fit for the crows: he is so fine-drawn as to appear all skin and bones, and steams like a limekiln; but he has come down the last hill at a 2′ 40″ stroke, and is going as well now if he can only keep it up a few seconds longer. What a pace it is! not like trotting in the least, nor yet like running—more a scramble than anything else. His feet rise two on the same side at once; sometimes all four are off the ground together, and he rocks till you fear he will roll over laterally. He tears along behind him a sleigh of the commonest construction, a mere deal box on runners, furnished with an ancient and fragmentary buffalo, which

serves for robe and cushion both. The driver is 'one of 'em,' a young butcher probably, in glazed leather cap and pea-jacket, despising gloves, yelling frantically to his animal, and putting on the string unsparingly, while he holds him up as if for life with his left hand. Close in the rear comes a beautiful clipped chestnut, a fair square trotter, driven in a handsome cutter by a fashionably-dressed youth. The young gentleman cannot be much above twenty, but he holds the ribands as carefully as an experienced jockey, and like a gentleman too—no recourse to the whip, no screaming at his horse, but a perfect management of his mouth, so as to get his full speed out of him without risk of a break. His nag has less foot for a brush than the pacer, therefore he is behind; but more strength and endurance, therefore he sticks to him, and hopes to catch him. About two lengths behind come an old gentleman and his negro servant, with a fine team of bays. They are large and handsome enough for carriage-horses, matched exactly, and go 'to the pole,' *i. e.* together in 3′ 25″—in fact they are going at that rate now. Down the hills they fall behind the single horses. but up-hill, where the weight tells, a team has the best of it; and accordingly you see them gaining now. The old fellow, who is as ardent for the sport as a boy, knows this well, and keeps them up to their work. The team gains on the chestnut, the chestnut on the black. they are not more than three lengths from the tavern. Suddenly the pacer stops short and capers. He is used up, and has 'broken.' The chestnut glides by like an arrow, and being none too fresh himself, escapes further pursuit of the team by slipping triumphantly under Wintergreen's shed, whither the discomfited black follows him; while the big bays keep their way up the road, and after them trail two men with a grey horse, who, though

visibly tailed off, still persist in a fruitless attempt to overtake the gallant pair.

'There goes twelve hundred cash,' says Schuyler, as he glances back at the receding trotters. 'But it's a good team, and well worth the money if a man has it.'

'I mean to treat myself to a team whenever I can pick one up at a fair valuation—when some one breaks or goes abroad, and wants to sell his horses. But I don't mean to trust myself in a jockey's hands again. I have had to do with the fraternity three times already, and come off tolerably well. Fortune is not to be tempted too often.'

'You have no reason to quarrel with your last purchase. He goes prettily, and keeps it up well. Does he pull much?'

'Not as trotters go; but he requires a tight rein. Hallo! Wo-o, Charlie!'

The horse has made a leap that jerks both the occupants of the sleigh nearly out of it, and would be off in a run but for the ready hand of his driver. At the same moment a large brown mare rushes by with the least possible quantity of harness on her, a shadowy sleigh behind her, and a little black-eyed, fur-capped man in it. Though Charlie is stepping off at least fourteen miles an hour, he is left behind in an instant as if standing still.

'There's a fast one! Can you catch him?'

'I should be sorry to try it with the double weight we have, and the start he has. Even if I were ten seconds in the mile faster than he is, I could not overhaul him before he gets to Sparks'.'

'True; he will stop at the Four-mile-House, no doubt. His pace is too good to last. I didn't think of that.'

About a minute and a-half passes in silence. Schuyler

not wishing to be caught again without notice, has roused himself from his recumbent attitude, and keeps a good look-out behind. Benson is wholly occupied with his horse, who grows more eager as he approaches home. They are near the Four-mile-House, when two common-looking men in a common-looking sleigh, with a long-legged roan pacer, emerge from the shed some hundred yards in front, and dart off at full speed.

'Now for it,' says Benson: 'we'll try those fellows.'

'Do you think you can have them? Their horse is going very fast.'

'You never can tell how fast a pacer goes till you are alongside of him. There is no stopping-place between this and town: they must go to the stones, or where the stones should be, and that's a mile and a half, and Charlie will outlast them that distance if they outfoot him at first. G'lang, old fellow.'

While thus delivering himself of his opinion, Benson has been making hasty preparation for the trial. Taking an equal hold of the reins at that point where he can best apply his whole weight and power to them, he twists one round each hand to prevent their slipping; then bracing his feet against a little iron bar that runs inside the swelling dashboard (for they would go right through the leather), he throws himself back on the lines simultaneously with the 'g'lang' that starts his horse. The ever-ready beast leaps off as if his run were arrested midway and turned into a trot; at every step his hind legs are lifted quicker and tucked further under him, and his fore feet rise higher from the ground as he darts down the slight descent before him at a three-minute velocity. The reins are so tight that you might stand upon them; Benson is nearly standing behind them, for as he neither will nor can give an inch (his arms being already stretch-

ed straight out and the reins secured by the twists in them), the pull all but lifts him to his feet. So rapid is the brush that they are soon close upon the other sleigh, and Schuyler can distinguish that its occupants are of not-to-be-mistaken Bowery cut—veritable 'b'hoys.' Charlie is just lapping their sleigh when the driver breaks out with an unearthly yell, which has the double effect of stimulating his own horse and frightening the other. The next moment Charlie is dancing in the air, and the old roan racker glides away as if by very magic, skimming over the snow like a bird, and looking ready to shake himself out of his ancient and scanty harness.

'Wo-o, Charlie! What y' about? Ho-o, poor fellow!' and Benson hauls his horse first to one side of the road and then to the other, in vain efforts to make him catch his trot. Charlie throws his head up and jerks it down, and keeps cantering for ten seconds in spite of all that can be done, till at last, just as they reach level ground, he strikes his true gait with a bound like a hunter's, and is off faster than ever. If the road continued to descend there would be little chance of closing the gap; but it now rises for a quarter of a mile, and a trotter generally climbs better than a pacer. This is what Benson depends on, and accordingly he drives as if for a fortune to come up with the racker before the road dips again. Now he eases out his horse the least bit by bending slightly forward; now he lifts him with the rein, and again holds on with all his might to keep him from breaking; now he stimulates him with a gentle chirrup, and now sends at him a prolonged growl, such as trotters and the drivers of trotters delight in. Meanwhile he carefully scans the road ahead, so as to avoid every inequality and keep on a smooth and even surface, nearly, but not quite, in the middle of the road, where

the snow is neither so much worn down as to make it hard running for the sleigh, nor so deep as to clog the horse's feet. Schuyler sits motionless and breathless, watching the rapidly diminishing interval between the sleighs. Benson's calculation proves true. Before the ascent is completed, the gap of eight or ten lengths has been shut to within one and a half. Charlie's head is in a parallel line with the pendant buffalo of the Bowery sleigh, and not more than three feet behind it. The broker's excitement overpowers him. His long body and sharp nose reach over like those of a cockswain when he bobs to the stroke, and his eyes flash with eagerness.

'Now hold him, Benson, hold him! Don't let him break; don't for God's sake! Shall I drive?'

'Teach your grandmother!'

Benson is comparatively cool; he feels sure of catching them before the descent, and then he means to wait on them down till he can tire out or break up the racker. And now the b'hoy, finding himself overhauled, emits another hideous screech, and lays the string about fearfully. But either he has been premature in his manœuvre, or Harry is better prepared for it this time: the only effect of all the row is to help Charlie on. Three of his bounding steps,—with the first he laps the other sleigh, with the second he is alongside the road, and the third puts his belly on a line with the pacer's nose. He is a neck and shoulders a-head and going his very best.

'Hi-i-i! G'lang! He-e-e-eh!' shout both the Bowery boys at once, and slash goes the long whip again. All they can accomplish by this demonstration is to fetch their horse up even with Charlie, who has lost a little ground by swerving to the right to avoid an omnibus that takes up half the road. This movement brings the sleighs so close that they almost touch, and thus they go

down the hill at the rate of eighteen miles an hour, locked like a double team. The b'hoy is pouring out a stream of yells at his horse, and Benson is holding on to his as a man holds on for his life. The pacer, black with sweat and dropping foam from his mouth, scrambles along with his head down like a lame cat, Charlie's glossy flanks are marked with a dark streak here and there, and a few beads of white hang about his mouth; he trots fair and square still, with his head well up and his legs striking out regularly as a steam-engine. The contest will be decided by this hill, for neither horse is fresh enough to make up a gap in the preceding half mile of level ground which brings them to the city. It is safe betting on the trotter if his temper and his owner's arms only hold out, for he goes better at every step, while his opponent flags visibly. See, Harry is a head and shoulders in advance again—all that he wishes to be at present, so he keeps his horse well in hand with a hard, steady pull. They are half way down, and the momentum of the descent is at its maximum when the b'hoy makes his last effort. Whip, voice, and rein are combined in one final push, and, aided by the ground, he absolutely shoves his horse once more even with Charlie. At this critical instant Benson feels the pull slacken a little—very little, but enough, combined with his keen eye for pace, to tell him that his horse is coming back to him.

'He-e-eh! Why, Charlie, are you going to leave your master, old fellow? He-e-eh! steady, boy! g'lang!' The lines are drawn tight as a bowstring; Charlie's neck goes out and his head down as he reaches away in his bounding trot, and gains half a length on the enemy at two steps.

'Steady, boy! so-o! G'lang now!'

'He-e-e-eh! Gr-r-r! G'lang, you beggar!'

'Take care, Benson, take care! *Now* you have 'em! Hurrah!'

Splut! There is a great scattering of snow. The racker has broken short up, and fairly disappeared in a cloud of his own raising.

For a hundred yards or more the trotter sweeps on triumphantly at the top of his speed. Then his owner draws him in very carefully, it being nearly as nice a matter to diminish as to increase the velocity of a fast horse, since the least jerk or sudden check will break him. More by the voice than the reins he is sobered down to his wonted pace of twelve miles an hour, at which the sleigh continues to slide on merrily, and our friends have a little leisure to look about them. They are passsing the Three-mile House, once a tavern on the road, but now less than half a mile from the pavement. It is past three, and every one is going out. The road is beginning to be thronged.

'What a lot of them!' says Benson. 'There is Henderson with his clipper bays, not so fast for a brush, but equal to anything for three miles. And there is Black Modesty—good for 2′ 38″. They call her Modesty because she travels with her head down. And there is Löwenberg, with four white horses.'

And the fiery little foreigner dashes by with two dashing Creole-looking women in his sleigh, and a neat groom, dangerously like himself, on the driving-seat alongside him.

'There goes the horse of horses, Jim Polk. His owner told me, that just before this snow came on he paced half a mile in fifty-nine seconds.'

He ought to repeat that in public, then, for his best mile time on record is 2′ 23″. But I wouldn't have him for a gift, unless I wanted to meet with what the

newspapers call the 'painful accident' of getting my neck broke.'

Benson cast one look at 'the fastest pacer in the world.' Polk is a middle-sized chestnut, with a flowing tail and mane, handsome enough for a lady's horse, and with power written in every muscle. He is pouring foam from a desire to get off, and his owner's efforts to restrain him. And then Harry turns round and starts off his horse once more, for his old enemy, the roan, is creeping up behind, and trying to steal a march on him. But it's no use. Charlie has lost his superflous fire; he can be held with one hand, and will take the whip. Benson puts it on him—three light strokes—and at every one he doubles himself up faster and throws more road behind him. By a great effort the pacer has put himself close behind Benson's sleigh, so that he is almost looking over Schuyler's head; but not another inch can he better his position, nor can he hold it more than a few moments. There is no more left in him, and he falls back exhausted, and is pulled up to a walk. And now as Harry for the second time eases down his horse, another four-horse sleigh meets them. It cuts more dash than Löwenberg's—richer furs, showier livery, finer horses, more paint and gilding. The team are greys and chestnuts (*sorrels* they are called in America), driven *chequered;* that is, the horses of the same colour diagonally. Highly polished steel chains take the place of martingale and polestrap; and the rest of the harness, except the collars and traces, is made of white silk cord. Within are two men and two women, elaborately dressed; but they are not of 'our set,' or any set that Benson knows.

'Schuyler, whose team is that? Some rowdy's, I perceive.'

'It shows you are a virtuous youth to ask such a question. You know all the proper celebrities, and none of the improper ones. That is Mary Black, who keeps the greatest flash-house in Leonard Street.'

'That vile woman! I thought she was in prison.'

'So she was, and got out again on some technicality.'

[They did 'quod' the woman permanently some months after; but it was only accomplished at great trouble and expense to the city, and Schuyler has already seen so many rogues go unwhipt of justice, that he may be pardoned a little scepticism.]

'Doubtless there are several causes of this maladministration, or non-administration of the laws, but one is particularly obvious. I consider the Anti-Capital-punishment agitators—Whitey, Carroll, and that set—directly responsible for half the rascality in this city and state. Their arguments, though nominally directed at the death penalty merely, really aim at all penalties, create a morbid sympathy for all criminals, and resolve all crimes into disease or insanity, according to phrenology, or some other of their hobbies, which they have dignified with the name of sciences.'

'Yes; and these scamps aim at all the property in the country, and want to resolve it into their own pockets. And that is why I think the *Jacobin* a worse paper than the *Sewer*, though the former preserves a decent exterior of language. It has been the great abettor of the Anti-Renters throughout.'

'*Does* it preserve a decent exterior of language? Is not Whitey an avowed Fourierite and Communist? and are not his contributors following suit?'

'But you don't know Whitey's excuse?'

'No.'

'He is the most henpecked and curtain-lectured of

men, and therefore goes in for Fourier's plan, hoping that, in the general distribution of women and goods, some one else may get Mrs Whitey.'

'A precious fellow, too, that correspondent of his, who has just been writing some city sketches—'Bits of Gotham,' he calls them. They are all constructed on this pleasant and easy syllogism,—'Some men in good society are hypocrites; therefore all respectable people are scamps.' To read this vagabond, a stranger would believe that our fashionable ladies were in the daily habit of making assignations at confectioners, and that all our church deacons and trustees lived upon the wages of iniquity, sanctioned, if not practised, by themselves. A pretty storm there would be if any foreigner dared to talk so; but this pestilent fellow, it seems, may slander his countrymen and countrywomen with impunity and profit! Did you ever hear of this man Goldsmith—P. P. Goldsmith, *Esquire*, as he calls himself?'

'No; but I believe he was cut or snubbed by some gentleman with whom he was trying to scrape acquaintance, and hence his hatred and abuse of the 'Upper Ten.''

'As to Carrol, one understands him well enough. *Est proprium humani generis*, and so forth. A benevolent Whig merchant took him up when a poor boy, educated him, and gave him a fair start in life. Of course he became a violent Democrat, intensely hostile to all Whigs,* and all merchants. His descent tells there. It's a real specimen of Irish gratitude.'

Benson remains half sulky half pensive. They sweep down the Avenue into the broad Bowery, and

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* The American Whigs are *Conservatives*, except some of those in New York.

through Lafayette Place again. Benson likes to drive past Lafayette Place, for he owns a house there, and it gives him a chance to talk about 'my house,' and 'my tenant.' They are in Broadway again.

'Won't you come and dine with us, Schuyler? Four sharp. The grand-governor is ill, and I have the cellar key and the butcher's book. There is a bottle of Cordon Blue in ice; our cook makes good oyster soup; smelts are prime now; and I laid in a tall Philadelphia capon this morning. Come!'

CHAPTER II.

A WEDDING 'ABOVE BLEECKER.'

THE first thing, as a general rule, that a young Gothamite* does is to get a horse; the second, to get a wife. Having, therefore, seen Henry Benson on the road, it naturally follows in order that we should go to see him married.

A fashionable marriage is an event to honour which all nature and all art are expected to put on their best face, and present themselves in their brightest colours. You go to such a wedding prepared to see the nicest kind of people under the most favorable circumstances. Accordingly, whereas in my last we found it necessary to mention Bowery Boys and newspaper editors, and various other low characters, not to speak of our friend Tibbets Schuyler, who is decidedly 'second set,' I shall, on the present occasion, introduce you to none but the real respectable, fashionable, exquisite part of New York society, the very cream of the cream; and if you find them very slow, it isn't my fault. I have an idea that fashionable people are stupid all over the world, even when they are fastest.

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* The appellation of *Gotham* was first given to New York by Washington Irving in his earliest work, *Salmagundi*, evidently alluding to the singular wisdom of the inhabitants; and the city is now familiarly known throughout America by this name; just as Boston, for less evident reasons, is generally called *the American Athens*.

It is mid-winter still, and there is snow on the ground; but the sleighing is not so good as it was, and the state of the streets admits 'wheeling.' Wheeling Benson is, not in the ancient olive chariot which he usually does his grandfather the honour to borrow when going out, for to-night the old gentleman is going out himself; but in the neat claret brougham of his first groomsman, Philip Van Horne, under whose auspices and comfort he is about to go through an awful ceremony at eight P. M.; that is to say, in about twenty-five minutes from the present time.

It is the ceremony of matrimony.

Henry was an orphan. This condition is in most parts of the world supposed to render a young man an object of pity and compassion; but in America it is deemed peculiarly desirable, as it puts him into possession of his fortune immediately on attaining his majority, and relieves him from even the semblance of authoritative interference with his movements after that epoch. So far as he can be said to have any home (for he has been very much in a state of transit and travel for the last four years, ever since he graduated at Columbia College), he lives with his maternal grandfather, Mr. Backus, in New York, during the winter, and at his brother Carl's country-seat on the Hudson in summer. When a young man of independent means is thus afloat on the world, his friends think it desirable to get him married as soon as possible, for the same reason that a boy is often sent to school—to keep him out of mischief. So when Henry came back from the Rhine one spring, and in the natural course of things was expected at Ravenswood (which, by the way, had never had a raven within ten miles of it), Carl took care to have proper relays of young ladies provided on visits of a week or a

fortnight each, ostensibly as company to Miss Benson, who had come out last winter: but it was known perfectly by all the dear creatures who came, that Carl Benson had a brother to dispose of. Three damsels came successively, and walked and sailed, and rode and drove, and went through all the proper business with Henry, the accompanying papas or mammas and Mr. and Mrs. Carl always taking care to keep at a respectful distance. And the three damsels departed successively, but not successfully, so far as the impression on either side was concerned. But when the fourth came, Harry finding her an undeniable beauty, and clever to boot, and knowing that she was an heiress to some extent, and that there was no mother-in-law, (an immense point), very speedily 'concluded to invest,' as Tibbets Schuyler would have phrased it, in case the young lady accorded. And, somehow or other; Clara Vanderlyn also came to the conclusion that Henry Benson was rich enough and handsome enough for her, and that he was a very proper and virtuous young man, and had a positive reputation for literary attainments. Not that she valued the last for its own sake, since she seldom read anything more profound than a novel, but she esteemed it as helping to give a man *éclat;* and, on the whole, decided that he was a very eligible match. Perhaps her decision was accelerated by the information conveyed in a letter from a friend at Oldport Springs, that her contemporary and rival *belle*, Miss De Lancey, had been cutting a great dash there, and was positively engaged to a rich Bostonian. Soon the young people began to look very understandingly at each other, and to make those mutual confidences of the eyes which express so much more than can be said in words; and the Vanderlyns were easily persuaded to stay another week; and it was hinted very

early in the fall* that there was something between Mr. Benson and Miss Vanderlyn; and as soon as they returned to the city, attentive friends kept asking them and their relatives 'if they were not engaged;' and when at last one fine day in the Indian summer (a delightful appendix to the warm weather which the northern states enjoy in November), the two were seen walking arm-and-arm down Broadway, nobody was the least surprised at it.

Harry is to be married, then, to-night, and he is going for that purpose—to church? No, to the house of his father-in-law.

Mr. Vanderlyn's house is distant from that of old Backus about half a mile north-westerly, and situated on the corner of one of the long, broad avenues, that intersect the upper part of the city longitudinally, and one of the widest of the numerous cross streets which in this quarter are wide and narrow in the proportion of about one to eight. The corner is a favorite situation. Why should it be thought desirable to have the dust and noise of two streets instead of one? A Frenchman or German disposed to theorize on local peculiarities would say it was owing to the business habits of the New Yorkers; that a 'corner lot' being more valuable for a shop or a warehouse, thus came by force of association to be considered equally so for a private dwelling. But there is a more natural and very appreciable reason for the preference. As the houses are built close against each other, with the main rooms three-deep on a floor, the middle room of the three in each story is dark, having no means of illumination from without, except when the

* An American rarely says *autumn* or *autumnal*, but uses the more poetic word, both as adjective and substantive.

position of the house at a corner affords a side light. The street on which one side of Mr. Vanderlyn's dwelling stands is a fashionably-built and inhabited street, and the avenue on which it fronts is *the* fashionable avenue. Three streets to the east there is one fully as broad and convenient; and two streets to the west another; but that on the east is decidedly second-rate in point of fashion, and that on the west literally nowhere, there not being a house belonging to 'any of us' in it. The general course of fashion has been necessarily northward (as the city, built on a narrow island, cannot expand laterally) with a slight inclination westward. But many accidents help to make a particular quarter fashionable. In the present instance, Vanderlyn and two or three of his friends happening to own land here, built on it, and were influential enough to draw other friends round them, and give a name and reputation to the avenue. Similar attempts are continually made, and frequently without success. The upper part of the city is dotted over with little spots, which have tried to be fashionable places and couldn't be. This is particularly the case with the portion 'above Bleecker Street,' which street is familarly taken, though not with strict correctness, as a boundary between the business and pleasure quarters of the town.

The house is built of brick; not, however, the flaring vermilion, with each individual brick picked out in white lead, which disfigures a great part of New-York (though it is not quite all red brick like Philadelphia), but a dark brown, nearly corresponding in colour to the thin veneering, as it were, of stone, which covers the front on the avenue. This same stone front presents rather an imposing appearance when you are right before it, but seen together with the brick gable on the street it exhibits a

contrast of material which, notwithstanding the similarity of the colour, is far from agreeable to the eye. Old Vanderlyn is a man of taste; considerations either of economy or of conformity to the popular want of taste must have led him to adopt this common incongruity.

Benson and Van Horne are ascending the steps. Let us go in with them, and you will see an average house of the first class, not such a one as a millionaire occasionally half ruins himself by building and furnishing to make a new lion for the town; but a fair type of a New-York gentleman's house, equal to the majority of those at which you will visit or dance during a season. It has been hinted more than once that land in fashionable localities is expensive, and the Gothamites, when they build, are consequently economical of ground. A 'lot' of the ordinary size is twenty-five feet front by a hundred deep. The desire to make one's house a *little* superior to the ordinary standard has caused many of the lots in the newer and more fashionable streets to be arranged, wherever the size of the 'blocks'* would admit it, with fronts of twenty-six or twenty-seven feet. It will be evident that such a width allows only one front room alongside of the not very wide hall; the house can only be extended perpendicularly and longitudinally.

Thus Mr. Vanderlyn's twenty-six feet are carried up into four pretty tall stories, and back over nearly seventy feet of the hundred which the lot contains, leaving the smallest possible quantity of yard, but allowing three rooms *en suite* on each floor. One inconvenience of this arrangement is, that either your hall shrinks into very small dimensions—becomes, in fact, merely two landing-

* A *block* is the front space of one street between two others from corner to corner.

places—or you must dispense with a private staircase altogether. Mr. Vanderlyn has chosen the latter alternative, and up and down a single steep and narrow flight of stairs, whenever the Vanderlyns give a party, every one has to tramp on entering and retiring, for all the cloaking and uncloaking must be done in the bedrooms, as there is no place for it elsewhere. Very inconvenient, you will say; but use is second nature, and the New-Yorkers are so used to this climbing and swarming on the stairs, that even in a *double house*, or a *house and a half*, or a *basement house*, three different styles which would all admit of cloaking-rooms on the lower floor, no one ever thinks of having them there.

Benson is now to become an inmate of the house where he has been so often of late a guest, for it is the invariable custom that the young couple shall reside with the bride's father for the first four or six months. Indeed he may already be said to have taken up his quarters there. This morning his valet came round; for Harry has just set up a valet, a sort of English-Irishman, who makes it his principal business to quarrel with all the other servants wherever he is; and this important personage brought over various preliminary instalments of Mr. Benson—seven coats and twelve pair of trousers, and about thirty waistcoats, no end of linen, and carpet bags full of boots, a gorgeous dressing-gown, and Turkish slippers, and smoking-cap, and cigars numerous, and all sorts of paraphernalia generally, until the little dressing-room adjoining the nuptial chamber is overflowing with foppery. And now as the happy man pauses on the second flight of stairs, he cannot help casting a glance at the door of the front room on the second story, for he hears the flutter of female voices and dresses, and knows that his bride is there. Yes, in that

room she is contemplating herself before a pier-glass, with her six bridemaids hovering around her, and making the last suggestions and arrangements about her dress.

Clara Vanderlyn, or Clara Benson we may call her now without much anticipation, is a New-York *belle* and beauty. The terms are not by any means synonymous, though in her case both attractions happen to be united. But when I speak of her as a beauty, you must dismiss all ideas of voluptuousness, commanding figure, Juno mien, and the like, and summon up all such associations as you have been accustomed to connect with the words sylph and fairy. You could not call her a 'fine' or a 'striking' woman, for she stands about five feet one, and weighs probably less than a hundred pounds; but you must own that she is a very lovely one. Her complexion is a pure blonde, the most exquisite combination of red and white; and her hair, that 'brown in the shadow and gold in the sun,' which poets love to rave of, and painters are always trying to paint. Her features are delicate and regular; her nose very slightly aquiline, with her thin blood-horse nostril, which is supposed to be aristocratic; her throat and chin beautifully rounded; her mouth small and tempting, yet with an expression of firmness at the corners, which to the close observer denotes no want of spirit; her eyes are the clearest blue, neither large nor languishing—they might not attract much attention by themselves, but are marvellously suited to the rest of her face, and give the signal for the ineffable smiles which, whenever she is thoroughly pleased, sparkle out suddenly over her whole countenance, and light up those beautiful and expressive features until

> A man had given all other bliss,
> And all his worldly worth for this,

To waste his whole heart in one kiss
Upon her perfect lips.

As to her dress, it is all white, of course, a delicate wreath of orange blossoms (white roses are trying to any woman, but especially to a small woman), a profusion of the finest lace—but no ornaments of any kind. What jewelry she has—and it is not a great deal—is displayed on a table in the little cedar-closeted passage that serves her for a dressing-room, along with all the handkerchiefs and fans, and small articles of plate, and various knick-knacks that she has received from her friends and relations; and they will all be inspected to-night by the curious ladies, who take advantage of such an opportunity to criticise everything in the house, from the new chandeliers to the bride's nightcap.

All this we see by our privilege. Harry sees nothing of it as yet. He passes on to the third story front-room, enters the open door with Van Horne close at his heels, and finds himself in the presence of a large bowl of punch and his second groomsman and first cousin Gerard Ludlow. There are plenty of mirrors and candles about, and a great display of toilet apparatus, in case the young men need to complete their Adonisation.

You couldn't do *much* more to the bridegroom, for he is got up to kill. His mulberry-blue coat, resplendent with gilt buttons, and white satin skirt lining, fits him as if he had been moulded and cast into it. His white watered-satin waistcoat, which descends about three inches lower than if it were the work of an English tailor, is set off by a heavy gold chain, streaming down from a little watch-pocket under his left arm to the lowest button-hole, into which it hooks. Surely he has appropriated some of what should be his wife's jewelry, for in that *very* embroidered cambric shirt of his sparkle three

splendid diamonds set in dark blue enamel. He must have stolen a bit of her lace to finish off that flourishing white tie. His pantaloons are a triumph of art, and his supernaturally fitting boots are—not patent leather, but (a wrinkle worth noting) thin French calf carefully varnished afresh from day to day. He has pulled off one glove, and is playing with it to show his little white hand and a fine sapphire which he has had cut into a seal ring.

Grand as he is, Ludlow is a touch above him. He has a grander tie, more embroidery, larger diamond studs, and for watch-chain an enamelled snake, with a head of opals and rubies. But Gerard is a magnificent fellow, and can carry off any amount of dress. If there were only some ornamental service, like the Guards, in New York, he would become it grandly; having no such resource, he drives stylish equipages (belonging to other people), gives and goes to *recherché* little dinners, and dances the polka and redowa in the intervals: by which contrivances he manages to pass his time agreeably and ornamentally. He is two years younger than Henry: though not precisely of like tastes, they are much attached to each other; indeed the only thing which ever alloys the good feeling between them is a slight family likeness sometimes remarked by strangers, to the annoyance of *both*. For Gerard, who is nearly half-a-foot taller than Harry, thinks himself, at least proportionably handsomer, which he is; and Harry thinks that he knows three times as much as Gerard, and shows it in his face, which he does: so neither of them is flattered by the resemblance. By the way, did you *ever* know two persons who were? Gerard's father allows him twenty-five-hundred a-year (*dollars* always remember), and he lives at the rate of eight thousand, partly by

tick, partly on his brothers and acquaintances; for he is so generous, affable, and altogether so gentlemanly a fellow, that it is a pleasure to oblige him; and some day he will be a rich man and repay all hospitalities and kindness with interest. Moreover, it should be mentioned in justice to him, that, with all his luxurious and spendthrift habits, he is free from any vicious propensity, drinks moderately, eschews gambling, and has no female acquaintance whom he would be ashamed to acknowledge before ladies.

And now it would not be respectful to postpone any longer our mention of Phil Van Horne, the oldest and richest of the groomsmen. A genuine Knickerbocker from the start, in the enjoyment of hereditary wealth, and fortunately without any turn for dissipation, he began by educating himself thoroughly, according to the American notion of the thing,—that is to say, he learned a little of everything. He studied law for six months after leaving college, and attended medical lectures for a year, and once contributed to a mathematical journal. He is an amateur performer on two or three instruments, and sketches rather prettily, and has mastered the common-places of three or four modern languages. But all these accomplishments being grafted upon a certain native Dutch solidity, he is by no means forward to display them, and will always let the rest of the company do the talking, unless you take considerable trouble to stir him up and put him through his paces. Perhaps it is this same disposition which has caused him to remain a bachelor till the mature age of thirty, though greatly sought after for his wealth, and connections, and abilities, and good habits (the money first and the virtue last: I believe we have enumerated the desirable qualities in their proper order). He is now an inveterate groomsman,

having assisted at half-a-dozen similar occasions within the last three years; indeed, it is considered quite the thing to call on Phil for his services, for he is tall and good-looking, and decidedly ornamental, in addition to his other merits.

Here come the other groomsmen, Sedley and Laurence, Jones and Robinson. Very young men they are —boys they would be called elsewhere. Sedley is a sucking barrister, sharp, spiteful, and loquacious; Jones makes believe to be clerk to his father, a well-known Wall Street broker; Laurence and Robinson are not long out of college, and have not exactly made up their minds what they shall be; their present occupation is chiefly dancing the polka. One resemblance you will observe in all the six: they have blue coats with gilt buttons, and their waistcoats are of the same pattern with Benson's, as if he had put them into his livery for the occasion; and so he has in a sense, for he gave them coats and waistcoats. Methinks this custom is somewhat snobbish, and might with propriety be abolished.

Benson is fidgeting slightly, and looking at his watch about once every three seconds; Ludlow and Sedley are chaffing him mildly; the other three are practising a polka step,—the natural resource of a young Gothamite when he has nothing else to do. A servant announces that 'the ladies are ready;' Van Horne, with very serious face, ladles out a full tumbler of punch, and hands it over to Harry, who disposes of it rapidly. Then they hasten down to the second story, where each man picks up his lady on his arm in passing; and so the party of twelve sail down into the middle parlour of the first floor,—the folding-doors on each side of which are closed. In the front parlour both families are attendant, to the number of sixty, of all ages; from old Backus, who

never stirs out except to see one of his grandchildren married, to the Master Vanderlyns, two promising collegians of fourteen and sixteen, who look up with intense respect to their new brother as a man who has been abroad, and owns a fast trotter. As soon as the bridal party is arranged in a semicircle, filling up about half the room, the folding-doors are thrown open, and the company have a very pretty *tableau* fronting them. Van Horne stands on Benson's right—it would not do to have the stately Gerard too near his less lofty cousin—and then the little men taper off down to Robinson, who looks hardly older or larger than the elder Benson Vanderlyn, notwithstanding his white tie. The bride, on her part, is admirably supported by her maidens. On her left is Miss Benson, a stylish brunette, with a half Egyptian head and swimming black eyes: she looks like a poetess, but is in reality remarkable for nothing so much as her common sense and management. Next her, is Miss Alice Vanderlyn, a somewhat larger and coarser edition of the bride, very good-natured and lively, and, on the whole, excellent *belle* material, though not a remarkable beauty. And then comes four more Misses, very pretty and proper, whom we will not dwell upon more particularly.

And now advances into the semicircular space between the two groups Dr. Mabury, the officiating minister. *Parson and port* is not the alliteration for New York, it is *Minister and Madeira.* The doctor presides over the most respectable church in the city. Every thing is respectable about it; the doctor himself and his congregation, and the architect and the organist, and the prim, pompous, ponderous (male) pew-opener, even to the 'respectable, aged, indigent females,' who are among the objects of its charity. Such clergymen are apt to love

good dinners as well as theology. So say, at any rate, the Presbyterian and Methodist preachers, who shun wine like poison, and wear long faces, and don't wear black coats; but, between you and me, I think it's all their spite. I know the doctor to be a very good and pious man; to say that he cannot excite spiritual concern in a hardened and worldly congregation is only to say that he is not a Whitefield or a Wesley. And as to the edibles and potables, he might tell you that it was flat blasphemy to hold that all the good things of this life are sacred to the evil one.

The marriage service has been completed about five minutes, and people are crowding unmeaningly round the bride and bridegroom, making them formal congratulations, when a shrill whistle is heard without, and the door-bell rings, and straightway the six groomsmen rush out into the hall, for the company are coming. Company? *What* company? Why, my unsophisticated reader, only the two families were asked to the *wedding;* but all the fashionables of New York, some seven hundred strong, were asked to the *reception.* And the manner of the reception is this. As the successive arrivals descend from—not their carriages, but the rooms up-stairs—the ladies are taken from their gentlemen by the groomsmen, and carried up to the bride to be presented to Mrs. Benson. A pretty amount of locomotion these six young gentlemen have to do for the next two hours, and a hard task it is for the bride to stand up all that time to be looked at. But she seems to bear it very well, and at any rate it is her own fault. Harry wished for nothing less than to expose her to this fatigue; but it was all the fashion to have receptions, and she would have one.

At last, just before eleven, the folding-doors of the

third parlour are opened, and the young couple walk in to supper. The groomsmen and bridemaids follow in order, and then there is a general rush. Let us take a bumper of the Vanderlyn Madeira and evaporate. The glare of these hard polished white walls makes one's eyes ache. We shall not lose sight of Henry and Clara for a *very* long time. Just one week from to-day one of the Backuses gives them a dinner-party, and the rest of their honeymoon will be a round of invitations. Rather soon to appear in public, isn't it? But repose is not a natural state to an American man, still less to an American woman. They like to be continually on the move.

CHAPTER III.

CATCHING A LION.

WHEN Henry Benson had been married about four years, the Honourable Edward Ashburner came to see him. They had known each other at Heidelberg, where Benson once spent six months,—long enough to get some kind of a degree and pick up a good deal of German, whether he learned any Latin and Greek or not. Ashburner had just taken a first-class at Cambridge, and was touring with an older Cantab who knew Carl Benson; hence the acquaintance. It was not a very long one: the young men were together for part of two days; but in that time they grew very jolly and comfortable over sundry bottles of Assmanshauser, and Harry gave the Englishman an unlimited and pressing invitation to stop with him if he ever crossed the Atlantic. Then they went their respective ways, and at this time Benson had a very dim recollection of who Ashburner was.

The first intimation he had of his arrival was in this wise. After passing nearly the whole day on Long Island to eat terrapin soup and spring chickens at Snedekor's, Harry, as he returned *viâ* the city to his place in Westchester, on a fine June evening, stopped at his town-house in Twenty-eighth Street. There, among a little heap of notes, and circulars, and business communications—'Sir, Your note for 2500 dollars at

the National Bank will become due on the 10th inst.;' and 'Dear sir, Your interest will be ready on the 8th, if you will call for it at my counting-room.' ('Confound the fellow,' muttered Benson, 'why can't he fix a time and call here, instead of making me tramp down into the Swamp among his skins?'*); and 'Sir, You are requested to attend a meeting of the Central Conservative Whig Young Men's Association next Monday;' and so forth—he found a small card, with 'Mr. Ashburner' inscribed thereon. He showed it to Mrs. B, that evening.

'English?' asked Clara, looking not over-satisfied.

'Rather,' said Harry, betraying no particular emotion either way.

'Well, I'm sure I don't want to see any more Englishmen this way for a long while. There was the scientific gentleman on his travels, who used to come to dinner in a flannel shirt, and use our house as if it was an inn. And there was that precious young ensign on a furlough from Canada, who did you out of a thousand dollars, and his father wouldn't pay a cent of it. And there was——'

'But this is a good fellow,' said Harry, cutting short the list of disreputable guests. 'Let me see; which of the Ashburners can it be? I knew three or four of them. There was Captain Ashburner at Oldport, summer before last, you remember; and his brother the Oxford man; and Lord Ashburner's son I knew at Heidelberg. I shouldn't wonder if this is Lord Ashburner's son. But they are all very fair men.'

Whatever doubts Benson may have had on the matter were dissipated next morning by the appearance of Ashburner himself. Our young tourist, having collected

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* The Swamp is a part of the city principally inhabited by carriers and tanners.

his letters of introduction, and spent nearly a day in tramping through the 'above Bleecker' part of the city, was gratified by finding that everybody was out of town, (except one old gentleman who had died recently); and learning that Benson, whose place fronted the thirteeenth milestone from City Hall, was the most comeatable of his acquaintances *in esse* or *posse*, resolved to hunt him up the next day. Eleven miles of the expedition he performed without difficulty on a tolerably well-appointed, but not a particularly fast railroad. For the remaining two he was obliged to foot it, fortunately in the morning of a not too warm day. The heats of May in this part of America are usually succeeded by a week or fortnight of comparatively cool weather in the beginning of June, before the sultry summer fairly sets in. So the guest reached his host's abode rather dusty but otherwise in good trim.

As Edward Ashburner will figure considerably in some of our sketches, it may not be amiss here to say a few words about him. He was nearly three years younger than Harry Benson, an eldest son, fond of classics, politics, and travelling, and had attained to that complete state of bodily and mental training combined, which most young Englishmen, who make a proper use of the advantages afforded them by their universities, are sure to arrive at. He stood nearly six feet in his stockings, could read twelve hours or walk twelve hours out of the twenty-four, according as he was called on to do either, eat anything, drink any amount, sleep anywhere. That he was awkward and shy in mixed society, and especially in ladies' society; that he had a clumsy way of doing civil things; that he dressed badly, danced badly, and spoke French badly, though fluently: all this follows of course from his being a young Englishman.

Benson's house at Devilshoof (which unromantic name the Bensons place had inherited from old Dutch times) was a wide, deep, wooden, two-story dwelling, of a sunshiny yellow colour, with a spacious piazza running all round it, and three rooms on a floor upon each side of a large hall. Into this hall Ashburner was admitted, and found Benson in full enjoyment of the *dolce far niente.* With cigarette in mouth and one foot in the air, the master of the house reclined in a lumbering Chinese cane-chair, nearly as big as an omnibus. He wore a magnificent shawl-pattern dressing gown, orange cashmere without, and rose silk within, confined at the waist by a tasselled cord that looked like a very superior style of bell-pull; very wide light blue trousers, slippers of the same colour embroidered in gold, a blue and white silk cravat, and a red smoking-cap, more for show than use, jauntily pitched on one side of his head. From his whole attire emanated a combined odour of French *sachets*, German Cologne, and Turkish tobacco. A beautiful child was sporting around him, playing bopeep behind the stupendous chair, and crying out 'Bah, papa!' As the visitor entered he leaped up, scattering the ashes and tobacco of his loosely-rolled cigarette over himself, and Ashburner, and the matting of the hall floor.

'How are you, old fellow? I'm *so* glad you've found your way here. Holla, baby! don't run away!' and catching the hope of the Bensons by both shoulders in the act of toddling off, he swung up the astonished urchin close to the nose of the equally astonished Englishman. 'Here's the first curiosity of the place, my boy! He's just three years old rising, can drive a horse on a straight road, fears no manner of bug,* eats everything he can

* *Bug* is the popular American designation of all insects except butterflies.

get, and drinks every liquid in the house except ink. Look at him! Isn't he a beauty? Isn't he a whole team and one horse extra?'

Ashburner duly praised young America, and at that moment Clara appeared, in a dressing gown also; but hers was a tricolour pattern, lined with blue silk.

'A very handsome young couple, certainly,' thought the Englishman, 'but how theatrically got up! I wonder if they always go about in the country dressed this way! And he thought of the sensation, the *mouvemens divers* that such a costume would excite among the guests of the paternal mansion at Alderstave.

Benson, with a rapid alteration of style and manner, and a vast elaboration of politeness, introduced his wife and guest. Ashburner fidgeted a little, and looked as if he did not exactly know what to do with his arms and legs. Mrs. Benson was as completely at her ease as if she had known him all her life, and, by way of putting him at his ease too, began to abuse England and the English to him, and retail the old grievance of her husband's plunder by Ensign Lawless, and the ungentlemanly behaviour of Lawless *père* on the occasion, and the voluminous correspondence that took place between him and Harry, which the *Blunder and Bluster* afterwards published in full, under the heading 'American Hospitality and English Repudiation,' in extra caps; and so she went on to the intense mystification of Ashburner, who couldn't precisely make out whether she was in jest or earnest, till Benson came to the rescue.

'When did you arrive, Ashburner?'

'Yesterday morning.'

'The first question an American generally asks an Englishman is, 'How do you like our country?' and the second, 'What'll you take to drink? I won't put the

first to you, for you have hardly been long enough here to answer it, but the second is always appropriate.'

'I have heard a great deal about sherry-cobbler, but did not order one at the hotel for fear I might not obtain it there in perfection.'

'You won't enjoy it anywhere in perfection just now. To be properly appreciated it requires a hot day, of which we shall have some in a week or two. Will you put yourself into my hands, and let me recommend for this weather some plain sherry? There is some all ready in the refrigerator; I will fetch it myself.'

And straightway Benson bustled off to the pantry, and speedily returned with a decanter of very pale wine and three glasses, which he placed on a diminutive stand.

'This is Manzanilla, our favourite sherry,' and he poured out a bumper to Ashburner, who made a doubtful face on tasting it, for with the bitter flavour of Amontillado was combined in it a distinct taste of ether. 'You don't like it, I see. No one does at first. When I came back in '44 this wine was just becoming fashionable. The first time I tasted it, it seemed like medicine; the second, I thought the flavour peculiar, but not unpleasant; the third time I became exceedingly fond of it. So it will be with you. And as you will very often have Manzanilla put before you, I thought it well to initiate you into the mystery of it at once. It is not a strong wine—all the better for that here. Our dry climate does not allow the same fiery and heavy drinks as your moist one. You must give up your ale and port, and brandied sherries. The very necessity of 'liquoring' so often in our warm weather obliges us to weaken our liquor. You can't ice this sherry too much. We dine at four or half-past, and you see this has been in ice already. What time is it?

Eleven. That reminds me. How long is your stay in Arimeca to be?'

'I do not intend to return till the end of the year, or perhaps till next spring.'

'Then of course you will do Niagara, and Canada, and the watering-places, this summer, come back to New York for the season (our season begins in November), and go on to Washington in mid-winter. You had better, then, put off all your lionization of the city (there is not a great deal of it to do) until your return. And now let me drive you down to your hotel; bring back your carpet-bag, and pass a few days with us till the warm weather sets in. Then we can go to my brother's place higher up the river, and after that shape our plans at leisure. Excuse me for three minutes while I put on my boots.'

Benson rushed to the back-door, shouted out some rapid orders to his stable, which, though partially concealed by trees, was within hailing distance of the house, and then scampered upstairs, where his three minutes turned out to be twenty or twenty-five: during which time Mrs. Benson and her husband's guest did not interchange much conversation, and Ashburner, in default of other amusement, applied himself again to the Manzanilla, which he certainly found to improve on acquaintance; so much so, that after finishing his first glass, he despatched a second, and was dubitating on the propriety of a third when Benson reappeared. He had exchanged his dressing gown for a dark brown cutaway, and his slippers for prunella boots of feminine aspect, tipped with varnished leather at the toe.

'Now, *mon ami*, I hear the wagon coming round; come out on the stoop.'

Ashburner remained stationary, not exactly understanding the invitation.

'Oh you don't know what *stoop* means. It is one of the Dutch words we Gothamites have retained. Well, then, come out on the front piazza.'

So they went out, and Ashburner saw before the door two compact little dark brown horses, with white faces and white hind-feet. They had on the very lightest harness imaginable—slender collars, cobweb-like traces and hip-straps, no winkers or check-reins; and behind them was such a vehicle as he had never seen before, even in dreams. At first he could discern nothing but four tall slender wheels of a bright vermilion picked out in red, with a groom sitting among them; but a closer inspection enabled him to perceive a scanty seat for two persons, with no appreciable back. The box of the seat was varnished leather, except a dark green wooden rim that rose about three inches from the gaily carpeted floor.

'There's my wagon,' said Benson; 'it's not a regular trotting wagon—weighs three hundred or more—but light enough for a team. Get in.'

'But *how* do you get in?' asked the other, looking very dubiously at the mysterious carriage, the front and hind wheels of which on the same side all but touched each other.

'So!' quoth Harry, who had meantime crowned himself with a very long-napped white beaver, and fitted on his white driving-gloves; 'just this way!'

And running behind, he leaped in over the back, or where the back might have been, and took the white-webbed reins from the groom, who, on his part, tumbled out half over, half between, the wheels by an extraordinary gymnastic evolution.

'Ah, *that's* the way, is it?' and Ashburner was preparing to follow suit.

'No, this is the way. Hold on.'*

Benson hauled in his off-horse, slanting his front axle and locking his off fore-wheel, by which means he left on the nigh side a considerable space between the hind-wheel and the front, and Ashburner first became aware of the existence of a practicable iron step, by which he ascended without much difficulty.

'Hold fast, old fellow,' said Benson, and he drew up the reins, which had been lying loose in his hand.

Immediately the horses started off at a pace that nearly sent Ashburner backwards out of the wagon. Out at the gate they flew, up the lane that led to the turnpike, through another gate, and along the main road at their authenticated speed of 3′ 20″, Benson settling himself further back in his seat and tightening his pull, and the trotters going faster as he pulled more. Ashburner could hear nothing for the clattering of the pole-chains and the patter of those eight hoofs as they swept the ground in their tearing trot, nor see anything for the clouds of dirt and gravel which the trotters' fore-feet threw back over the low dashboard. He held on with both hands, and trusted to Providence.

'Wo-o!' ejaculated Benson at last, after proceeding for about two minutes at this headlong rate; and as he spoke he slackened his reins gradually. The horses fell into a steady gate of twelve miles an hour.

'We must take them easy most of the way,' says Harry, 'for the roads are heavy.'

'Do you call *this* going easy?' replied his friend, with a glance at the rapidly receding objects on each side the road. 'We must be making sixteen miles an hour.'

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* *Hold on* is American for *hold hard.*

'Not thirteen. You always seem to be going faster with a team than you are, because they make more noise.'

'Well, I don't pretend to judge of pace just now, for my eyes are full of gravel. Why don't you build your dashboards higher?'

'Because it is necessary to see the horses' feet. Before a well-trained trotter breaks, he usually gives warning by a skip or two. With a low dashboard you can note this instantly, and hold him up in time; otherwise your horse might be carried off his feet before you knew it.'

So they rolled along merrily some five miles to Harlaem Bridge, over which the team walked, not because they were tired, but because it was illegal to cross at a faster gait,—an ordinance rendered necessary by the frail structure of most American bridges; and then as they passed through the village of Harlaem, where taverns, and stables, and fast trotters abound, Benson gave his horses another brush, by way of astonishing the natives.

'He-e-h!' shouted a blacksmith, looking up from his work as the vermilion wheels rattled by.

The nigh horse made a skip, and his driver just caught him in time.

'He-e-eh! G'lang!' shouted back Harry over his shoulder, in triumphant defiance, as much as to say, 'You don't break up my team so easy, my boy!' And then growing excited by the pace, he continued to scream at his horses and lift them, until he had succeeded in aggravating the trotters to such an extent, that when he wanted to pull up at the next milestone, they could not be made to stop, though it was on the ascent of a pretty steep hill, until he had thrown one leg over the lines.

'Your animals are not easily tired,' his friend remarked, as, for the first time, they proceeded at an easy trot. 'Are these *very* fancy horses, or is it common to have such a pair?'

'There are several teams on the island that can beat me five or ten seconds in a mile, but few so well matched in looks or driving together so nicely. I have had them a year, and they are pretty well used to my hand,—and to my wife's, for that matter.'

'And what does such a pair cost?'

'I got these a bargain for 800 dollars from a friend, who was just married and going abroad. Probably, a jockey would have charged me four figures * for them. That was a year ago last month. I had twenty-six hundred then to spend in luxuries, and invested it in three nearly equal portions. It may amuse you to know how. These horses I bought for myself, as I said, for 800 dollars; a grand Pleyel for Mrs. Benson for 900 dollars; and a man for myself for the same sum.'

'*A man?*'

'Yes, a coachman. You look mystified. Come, now, candidly, is New-York a slave State? Do you know, or what do you think?'

'I had supposed it was not.'

'You supposed right, and know more about it than all your countrymen take the trouble to know. Nevertheless, it is literally true that I bought this man for the other 900 dollars; and it happened in this wise. One fine morning there was a great hue and cry in Washington. Nearly a hundred slaves of different ages, sexes, and colours, most of them house-servants in the best families, had made a *stampedo*, as the Western men say.

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* *I. e.* A thousand dollars or more.

They had procured a sloop through the aid of some white men, and sailed off up the Potomac,—not a very brilliant proceeding on their part. The poor devils were all taken, and sentence of transportation passed upon them—for it amounts to that: they were condemned (by their masters) to be sold into the south-western States. Some of the cases were peculiarly distressing,—among others, a quadroon man, who had been coachman to one of our government secretaries. He had a wife and five children, all free in Washington; but two of his sisters were in bondage with him,—very pretty and intelligent girls, report said. The three were sold to a slave-trader, who kept them some time on speculation. The circumstance attracted a good deal of attention in New-York; some of the papers were full of it. I saw the account one morning, and happening to have this 900 dollars on hand, I wrote straight off to one of our Abolition members at Washington (I never saw him in my life, but one doesn't stand on ceremony in such matters, and the whole thing was done on the spur of the moment), saying that if either of the girls could be bought for that sum I would give it. The gentleman who had the honour of my correspondence put upon him, wrote to another gentleman—standing counsel, I believe, for the Washington Abolitionists—and he wrote to the slave-trader, one Bruin (devilish good name, that, for his business!) who sent back a glorious answer, which I keep among my epistolary curiosities. 'The girls are very fine ones,' said this precious specimen; 'I have been offered 1000 dollars for one of them by a Louisiana gentleman. They cannot be sold at a lower price than 1200 dollars and 1300 dollars respectively. If I could be sure that your friend's motives were those of unmixed philanthropy, I would make a considerable reduction

The man, who is a very deserving person, and whom I should be glad to see at liberty, can be had for 900 dollars; but I suppose your correspondent takes less interest in him.' The infernal scamp thought I wanted a mistress, and his virtuous mind revolted at the thought of parting with one of the girls for such a purpose—except for an extra consideration.'*

'It must have been a wet blanket upon your philanthropic intentions.'

'Really I hardly knew whether to be most angry or amused at the turn things had taken. As to Clara, she thought it a glorious joke, and did nothing for the next month but quiz me about the quadroon girls, and ask me when she might expect them. However, I thought with the Ethiopian in the ballad, that 'it would never do to give it up so,' and accordingly wrote back to Washington that I should be very glad indeed to buy the man. Unfortunately, the man was half-way to Mississippi by that time——Now we are well up that hill and can take a good brush down to the next. G'l-lang, ponies! He-eh! Wake up, Firefly!'

'And then?'

'Oh, how he got off, after all! It was a special interference of Providence. (G'lang, Star!) The Hon. Secretary felt some compunctions about the fate of his coachman, and hearing that the money was all ready to pay for him, actually paid himself the additional 50 dollars required to bring him back to Washington; so he lives there now a free man with his family,—at least, for all I know to the contrary, for I never heard any more about him since.'

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* All the above incidents are literally true, and the extracts from Bruin's letter almost *verbatim* copies.

'And what became of the girls?'

'There was a subscription raised for them here. My brother Carl gave something towards it,—not that he cared particularly for the young ladies, but because he had a strong desire to sell the gentleman from Louisiana. They were ransomed and brought here, and put to school somewhere, and a vast fuss made about them—quite enough to spoil them, I'm afraid. And so ends that story. What a joke to think, of a man being worth just as much as a grand piano, and a little more than a pair of ponies!'

Ashburner thought that Benson treated the whole affair too much as a joke.

'Tell me,' said he, 'if these people came to New-York, or you met them travelling, would you associate with them on familiar terms?'

'Not with Mr. Bruin, certainly,' replied Harry. 'To give the devil his due, such a man is considered to follow an infamous vocation, even in his part of the country.'

'But the Honourable Secretary and the other gentlemen, who sell their men to work on the cotton plantations, and their women for something worse?'

'H-m! A-h! Did you ever meet a Russian?—in your own country, I mean?'

'Yes, I met one at dinner once. I won't pretend to pronounce his name.'

'Did you go out of the way to be uncivil to him, because he owned serfs?'

'No, but I didn't go out of my way to be particularly genial with him.'

'Exactly: the cases are precisely parallel. The Southerners are our Russians. They come up to the North to be civilised; they send their boys here to be

educated; they spend a good deal of money here. We are civil to them, but not over genial,—some of us, at least, are not.'

By this time the fast-stepping trotters had passed through Yorkville, and reached the outskirts of the city. As soon as their feet touched the pavement they fell into a walk.

'You see it is impossible to drive fast over these terrible stones in a light carriage, so we shall go easy for this last mile to your hotel,' said Benson. 'We can afford it, for there wasn't much time lost on the road. See here (pulling out his watch), twelve miles in forty-nine minutes, including a stoppage for toll! I call that pretty good travelling.'

And now Ashburner became sensible of a change in the temperature. They had been making their own breeze previously by the rapidity of their motion, but now there was scarcely a breath of air, and as the wagon was undefended by any sort of top or head, he began to feel the heat of the sun more than was altogether pleasant.

'Surely it is hot enough *now* for a sherry cobbler?' he remarked, after a pause.

'Hardly, to enjoy one in perfection, but it will do. When we get to your hotel I'll brew you a first-rate one.' And, the horses being stimulated to a gentle trot, they soon arrived at Ashburner's temporary head-quarters, which were, fortunately, 'above Bleecker.'

'Now pack your bag,' said Benson, 'and the cobbler will be ready by that time.'

'But what do you do with your horses?' asked the other who saw no groom or other person to whom they might be entrusted.

'Tie them, to be sure,' was the reply; and handing

the lines to Ashburner, as he stopped his team, Benson leaped out, pulled a hitching-strap from under the seat, and fastened his off-horse very neatly to a lamp-post. Then, after Ashburner had descended, he tied his white hand-pieces to an opening made for the purpose on one side of the dashboard, and finally diving under the seat once more he produced two sheets, with the names of his horses, *Starlight* and *Firefly*, showily worked thereon in red letters, and spread them carefully over his team. Then, taking his whip with him for fear of casual appropriators, he accompanied his friend into the hotel.

When Ashburner returned to his sitting-room, after arranging his bag, he found Benson in all his glory, surrounded by the sutorial requisites. Four large tumblers, two wine-glasses, a couple of lemons, ditto of knives, a decanter of sherry (not Manzanilla, but dark in colour and high in flavour), a saucer of powdered sugar, and another of finely-pounded ice, were paraded on the table, and among them sat Benson, on the table also, examining a bundle of fresh straws.

'Now,' said he, 'take a knife and a lemon, and do as you see me do; don't mind soiling your fingers. First you rub the lemon with the back of the knife—that brings out the essential oil better; then you pare off the rind very carefully, taking only the yellow, and not cutting into the white at all. Very well. Imbed your lemon-peel in as much sugar as you would use if making a similarly-sized glass of punch. Sometimes you will see *slices* of lemon put into a cobbler—nothing can be more destructive; avoid everything but the yellow peel. If you *will* have something more, put in a slice of orange or pine-apple, or a few strawberries. I think this may be done to good effect in a bowl, but not in a single glass. Now fill your tumbler half-way with pounded ice.

Good. And now pour in two wine-glasses of sherry. You see we use dark sherry for this, both for the strength and the colour. It makes the mixture of a beautiful golden hue; with Amontillado or Manzanilla it would look too weak. Don't be impatient; we have to mix yet.' He took up one of the spare glasses, covered with it the mouth of the tumbler which contained the magic compound, and shook the cobbler back and forwards from one glass to the other a dozen times without spilling a drop. 'There, now choose a perfect straw, and then try it! I'll change glasses with you as yours is not yet mixed, and you might not be handy at tossing it the first time.'

Ashburner took a long draught of the cool liquid through the straw, and confessed that he experienced a new sensation.

'Now don't drink it too fast. You should take a quarter of an hour to each glass. Three glasses a-piece will be enough, and we have an hour before us.'

The decanter terminated with the hour. In the pauses of the cobbler, Benson having caught Ashburner's flunkey as he looked in at the door, read him a lecture on the best way of employing his time during his master's absence, by making himself acquainted with the city, &c.; laying down the law so rapidly, that the man, who was about of the average English flunkey intelligence, was completely mystified, and Ashburner himself as much astonished as an Englishman ever permits himself to be to hear his servant tutored by another man.

'I must be permitted to doubt your wisdom,' said Benson, as the servant retired, 'in bringing him with you. On the Continent one must have a courier,—it really saves money as well as trouble, for the fellow cheats you a little and prevents you being cheated a

great deal; but a man-servant, who does not understand both the customs and the language of the country (the former quite as important a point as the latter), is only in the way. To be sure, he is of some service as a valet when you are at a city hotel, and he *may* learn enough of the streets in a few days to go your errands for you (though I should doubt that unless he is sharper than most English servants that I have seen); but when you get into the country, especially in the West, you will find this man sitting at the same table with you, riding in the same vehicle, paying the same fare,—in all respects treated as your equal; and, since you have your wits about you more than he has, you will, in fact, be obliged to take care of him, instead of his being of any service to you. And now as the sherry is all gone we will go too, especially as we have but eighty minutes to get home and dress for dinner.'

Benson's advice was very correct and proper in itself, but there was also a little personal motive mixed with it. He had no intention of including Ashburner's attendant in the invitation to stop a few days, lest the English body-servant should quarrel with his own black cook and Irish grooms, whom he found it hard enough to manage already. When Ashburner and he descended to their vehicle, the former observed several idlers gazing at it, and remarked that the turn-out, which would have attracted a crowd in London, was something to look at even in New York.

'That's on account of my red wheels,' exclaimed Benson. 'They *are* rather rowdy, I must own; not exactly the thing for a gentleman. But the use of them is this. I go to a trot on Long Island; there are some hundred wagons there, all fastened close together to fences or under sheds. My wheels are so conspicuous that

I can pick them out at once in a great crowd, and it saves much time and trouble in starting for home. Now I shall drive round the corner to a livery stable, and sponge out the ponies' mouths, and then hey for Devilshoof!'

Back to Devilshoof they went, even faster than they had come; and before the clock struck four Ashburner had full time to dress and rid himself of some pounds of the Third Avenue and Westchester turnpike, which had been thrown into his ears and eyes, down his cravat, into his trousers' pockets even, by the forefeet of Starlight and Firefly.

Dinner was served at four precisely. The table service was of the plainest description, not a vestige of plate except the silver forks; and the viands of no very *recherché* kind—home-raised chickens and a Virginia ham constituting the staple of the meal; but everything, from the ockra soup to the orange fritters, was first-rate of its kind; the indispensable Manzanilla was supported by excellent champagne, decanted and iced to the freezing point (a good test of wine, for no inferior quality will bear it); and when, at last, Benson commended to his guest a prime bottle of Latour, and a swelling slender-necked decanter of the old Vanderlyn Madeira, Ashburner felt thoroughly comfortable and content, as a man should, who is drinking well after having dined well. He was a pretty fair hand at the bottle, as most Englishmen are; indeed, he crowded his host very hard, who was a fastidious, but not a profuse drinker, and liked to sip his Bordeaux leisurely. Before their united efforts the jug of claret and the decanter of Madeira speedily vanished; and then came some sublime coffee, during the discussion of which Benson extemporised a dissertation on the method of preparing that beverage, 'which it is

singular your countrymen never understand how to make; finally a *chasse* of white Curaçoa assisted the guest to swallow his host's lecture.

Mrs. Benson had joined freely in their conversation during the repast; indeed, she may be said to have taken the largest share of it to herself. At first she was barely within the bounds of civility; slighted or ridiculed everything about the English unmercifully; and more than once puzzled Ashburner both as to how he was to take her remarks, and how to reply to them. Gradually this sauciness, and almost rudeness, refined itself down to a piquant raillery, with occasional gracefully compensating compliments, till he found her discourse as agreeable as it had at first been embarrassing. Still there was always in it an air of half-defiance, and half-carelessness, that strangely affected the young Honourable, who had always been petted and toadied at home, and was not used to meet an untitled person who thought, and showed that she thought herself, at least, as good as himself.

After dinner, Benson carried off his guest to the stable, and had the stud paraded before him.

'That black is my blood colt, Daredevil: Mrs. Benson and her sister are the only two men on the island that can ride him, Hibernically speaking. He threw me, the other day. If you want to show your horsemanship, he will give you a good opportunity of doing so, whenever you please. And this is my pet saddle-horse, Charlie; he used to be a fast-trotter in harness, till I broke him over again for riding; and this is my wife's gray mare; and these my carriage horses. Aren't they beauties, though I say it myself?'

'Very handsome, and very well matched; but rather small, I think, according to our standard. They are not sixteen hands, surely?'

'Just fifteen three; and, do you know, my only fault with them is, that they are rather large. We prefer middle-sized horses; we think that large ones generally have less speed, and always knock themselves up sooner. On the first point there may be a doubt, but on the second there is none, at least in this country. I gave 500 dollars for this team, and I could have bought more than one pair nearly three inches taller, and as well matched, for less money. There are my ponies, whose capacity you are acquainted with.'

'How comes it that you call horses of that size ponies, when your average height is below ours?—at least I judge it to be so, for I have seen nothing about your city like our large dray-horses.'

'I believe that any horse under carriage size is familiarly denominated a pony, especially if he happens to be a trotter. I have heard Charlie called a pony often, and he is nearly as big as my coach-horses.'

Then they strolled round the place, which did not involve a very long walk, as Benson's grounds were comprised within the limits of fourteen acres; accordingly he extended their perambulation by diverging into the neighbours' premises on both sides. The places had one general character. There was no attempt anywhere at lawns, which, indeed, could not be kept up in perfection under the hot American sun by any amount of care and labour; the open grass between the houses and the river was suffered to grow long, and occasionally broken by natural banks and terraces. The river views were beautiful; white sails specked the clear blue water, and white clouds the clear blue sky, except where long lines of scarlet and gold marked the downward progress of the setting sun. The gardens were formal, more resembling Dutch than English; the hot-houses small, there

being less necessity for them, as grapes and melons flourish here in the open air. The mansions were invariably built of wood, large and roomy. There were no hedges, and few fences, except at the boundaries; what there were seemed, almost purposely, to be allowed to fall into decay.

Fatigued with his day's experiences, Ashburner was not sorry to take an early opportunity of retiring. Benson himself played chamberlain, and showed him to his room.

'I believe your countrymen are addicted to feather beds and curtains,' he said; 'but we really have not either in the house. We use nothing but French bedsteads and hair mattresses.'

Ashburner assured him that he was not so effeminate as to require anything softer.

'And we have not the Croton water-works here; but there is a portable shower-bath,' pointing to a sort of tent in one corner of the apartment, 'which you will find convenient in the morning. *Buenas noches!*'

Ashburner spent nearly a week at Devilshoof, as much pleased, perhaps, certainly as much amused, as he had ever been at a country mansion in his own land, though he was differently entertained, and had, in some respects, a very different sort of host. The American was full of dash and *à plomb*, and good-humoured braggadocia. *Stiff*, *shy*, *reserved*, *silent*, *modest*, were words that might have had no existence in the (English or American) language, so far as he was concerned with them. Ashburner could not help wondering at the matter-of-course tone in which a young man, little older than himself, and considerably under thirty, spoke of 'What I said to Daniel Webster,' and 'When I was trustee of the Historical,' and 'The petition that we are getting up

to the Common Council to open the Tenth Avenue,' and 'When I was seeing about Mary's settlements,' and 'Once, when I knew more about stocks than I do now, and used to write the money articles for the *Blunder and Bluster*;' in short, he talked like a man who had already been for years a well-established and important member of the community. Whatever his establishment did not possess he made no attempt to conceal the deficiency of; whatever he had was usually pretty good of its kind, and he made no secret of that either. When Ashburner came to know him better, he found the secret of this, which was twofold.

Henry Benson was an orphan, as the reader may or may not remember. Since his wedding he had lost his father-in-law and grandfather; married off his sister to a rich Philadelphian; quarrelled with most of his cousins; and so, with the exception of his brother Carl (and him he met, perhaps, six times in the course of a year), he had no one to depend upon, look up to, or consult, and was entirely left to his own energies and discretion. The death of his relatives had increased his independence as well as his isolation, by doubling his income. During his childhood he had seen a good deal of rough life in country boarding-schools—places where instances have been known of boys being compelled to clean their master's horse or boots, precisely *à la Dotheboys Hall*. His quick apprehension and retentive memory made him a fit subject for the superficial and miscellaneous, but very practical education, common in his country. His foreign travel added to this a fair speaking acquaintance with three or four modern languages, and a knowledge of the dishes, and dresses, and other obvious external peculiarities of the principal nations in Europe. He made a first-rate match, almost without an effort on his part. All

these things put him in a position nearly answering to the Greek idea of the man αὐταρκής, or self-sufficient. He knew no subject very deeply or accurately, but something about almost every subject in the schedule of human knowledge; and whatever he did know was always at his command and ready to be made the most of. He could write newspaper and magazine articles, critical, political, or financial, with vast facility, being restrained by no modest doubts or scruples; and could stand up and harangue any number of people about any topic, without notice (a faculty, it may be here remarked, which comes by nature to all Americans, educated or uneducated). He did his own marketing, and collected his own rents and interests. He could show his cook how to prepare a new dish, and draw patterns of carriages for his coach-maker. Half the time he cleaned his gloves and varnished his dress-boots himself, being fully persuaded that he could do them better than his man. He drove about the country in his wagon without a servant; and if he had occasion to stop at any place where the stable-boy was out of the way, or occupied, unharnessed his own trotter with little difficulty, and less scruple. He was always well up in the prices of stocks and real estate. When he chose to play Sybarite, he surrounded his friends with all the comforts that wealth could procure, while he was still independent of all the ministers of luxury, and could have roughed it at any moment with the most enterprising traveller, though in the daily enjoyment of silken ease at home. Such a man's consciousness of independence is apt, nay, sure to make him a little conceited; and those young men, of whom Benson is a marked and favourable type, are conceited, it must be owned, and talk in a way beyond their years, to judge by the customs of any other country; but then, in no other country are young men similarly circumstanced, educated, and developed.

But the showy and flourishing style of Young America was, moreover, increased in this particular instance by Benson's position as host. The Englishman is by nature rather charitable than hospitable. Generous to the foreigner if he comes before him *in formâ pauperis*, he is otherwise not over-desirous of his company, or solicitous of his good opinion. Perfectly satisfied with himself and his country, he relies for any future possible improvement on the progressive idealization of his own character, not on the adoption of any hints from abroad. When he travels, he generally contrives to carry a little England of his own about with him; and therefore, seldom requiring the assistance of others in a foreign land, he cannot fully appreciate the difficulties of a foreigner in his. The American is naturally hospitable. The mere name of 'stranger' makes a man to him an object not of suspicion, but of sympathy—and this, too, though he has suffered from foreign impostors quite as much in proportion as honest John Bull. Feeling that his country is a new one, and yet making its position in the world; knowing, too, that everything connected with it is apt to be misconceived and misrepresented in Europe, he is painfully anxious to put his best foot foremost in the presence of strangers, and to prove to them, not by words alone, but by deeds, that his countrymen are neither illiterate nor uncivilized. His ambition extends further still; he delights to startle his visitor with his fast trotters and elegantly-built carriages, miraculously-cut coats, and sumptuous furniture, old Madeira, canvass-backs, beautiful women, and other vanities of the world, in the highest perfection.

Thus it happened, that whatever Benson said or did was said or done with a view of showing off before Ashburner. He dressed half-a-dozen times a day, in fancy

cutaways, wonderful checked trousers, with cross-bars of different but harmoniously blended colours, and an infinite variety of cravats and waistcoats; and regularly put himself into a dress coat and black continuations, diamond studs and varnished boots, for their four o'clock dinner, at which he plied his guest with choice vintages, the names of which were as puzzling to him as the flavours were delicious. Then, again, to show that he was not a mere fine gentleman, he would put on the seediest of summer paletots and moleskin trousers, with an old straw hat or oilskin cap, and in that trim drive Ashburner to see the High Bridge, or other lions within five or six miles, or ramble about the country with him before breakfast. Though very fast for a short brush, he was evidently unused to long walks, and terribly pounded by them; but having discovered that Ashburner liked this kind of exercise, he accompanied him heroically for hours, at an almost professional pace, consoling his fatigue afterwards as best he might by vast potations of cobbler. He laboured hard, and not unsuccessfully, to beat Ashburner at his own game of billiards.* He always managed to have his magazine articles laid about on tables where his friend would be pretty sure to read them; while, on the other hand, he was careful to keep out of his way any less favourable specimens of the periodical literature of the country: and Ashburner once detected him at a neighbour's house, in the act of hiding a particularly scandalous number of *The Sewer*, lest it might fall under the stranger's observation. Conscious that his Latin and Greek was not on a par with the Englishman's, he branched out largely, whenever occasion offered, into

* The Americans usually play the four-ball game, scoring the losing hazards *against* the party making them.

German, French, and Spanish literature; particularly the last, where he had it all his own way: still he did not abstain from bringing in a liitle classical allusion when an obvious opportunity afforded itself. And generally he was sedulous to say smart things, and tell good stories. In all which matters, except pedestrianism, his wife imitated, or, it would be more correct to say, surpassed him: for she had more art of concealing her art, and her efforts were less obvious. The couple were never at a loss, never dull, never uninteresting, and, withal, showed such good nature and sincere desire to make their guest at home, that in three days Ashburner felt as if he had known them all his life.

The knowledge that Harry Benson had a friend from abroad stopping with him, was the signal for letting loose all the hospitality of the neighbourhood—not a very large neighbourhood so far as it concerned Benson, though his country acquaintance was somewhat less select than his town set. Small as it was, Ashburner received invitations enough in that week to have lasted him two months, and some of them without the formality of a previous introduction. He dined and supped in all directions: but all his entertainers, though equally hospitable, did not make so favourable an impression on him as his original host had done. The younger men were mostly merchants, who came up daily from the city by a late train; the older, retired bankers, who still amused themselves by little speculations. Their talk was of wines and the stock-market, with an occasional cross of trotting-horse. It was at one of their tables that Ashburner learned (what Harry himself had with difficulty refrained from telling him) that Benson once, as a great favour, let a rich Southerner have some half-dozen bottles of the Vanderlyn Sercial at twenty-five

dollars per bottle. The women pleased him more; most of the daughters were pretty, and some of the mothers retained beauty enough to convince him that *all* American women do not grow old at thirty. Both mothers and daughters were always ready to keep up the conversation, never leaving him to make the running, as a sporting man might phrase it, but evidently considering it their duty to try to amuse the stranger. When Ashburner next wrote to his respected governor, he did not deem it unpatriotic, or beneath his dignity, to admit that he had passed one of the pleasant weeks in his life under the roof of his old Heidelberg acquaintance, Henry Benson.

CHAPTER IV.

LIFE AT A WATERING-PLACE—ACCIDENTS WILL HAPPEN.

'HURRAH, old fellow!' shouted Ashburner's host, on the seventh morning of his visit; 'here's a letter from Carl. I have been expecting it, and he has been expecting us, some time. So prepare yourself to start to-morrow.'

'He can't have been expecting *me*, you know,' suggested the guest, who, though remarkably domesticated for so short a time, hardly felt himself yet entitled to be considered one of the family.

'Oh, *us* means Clara, and myself, and baby, and any friends we choose to bring,—or, I should say, who will do us the honour to accompany us. We are hospitable people, and the more the merrier. I know how much house-room Carl has; there's always a prophet's chamber, as the parsons call it, for such occasions. You *must* come; there's no two ways about that. You will see two very fine women there,—*nice persons*, as you would say: my sisters-in-law, Miss Vanderlyn, and Mrs. Carl Benson.'

'But, at any rate, would it not be better to write first, and apprize him of the additional visitor?'

'We should be there a week before our letter. *Ecoutez!* There is no post-office near us here, and my note would have to go to the city by a special messenger.

Then the offices along the Hudson are perfectly antediluvian and barbarous, and mere mockery and delusion. Observe, I speak of the small local posts; on the main routes letters travel fast enough. You may send one to Albany in nine hours; to Carl's place, which is about two-thirds of the distance to Albany, it would take more than half as many days,—if, indeed, it arrived at all. I remember once propounding this problem in the *Blunder and Bluster*:—'*If a letter sent from New York to Hastings, distance* 22 *miles, never gets there, how long will it take one to go from New York to Red Hook, distance* 110 *miles?*' We are shockingly behind you in our postal arrangements; *there* I give up the country. 'No, you mustn't write, but come yourself,' as Penelope said to Ulysses.'

Ashburner made no further opposition, and they were off the next morning accordingly. Before four a cart had started with the baggage,* and directions to take up Ashburner's trunks and man-servant on the way. Soon after, the coachman and groom departed with the saddle-horses, trotters, and wagon; for Benson, meditating some months' absence, took with him the whole of his stud, except the black colt, who was strongly principled against going on the water, and had nearly succeeded in breaking his master's neck on one occasion, when Harry insisted on his embarking. The long-tailed bays were left harnessed to the *Rockaway*,—a sort of light omnibus open at the sides, very like a *char-à-banc*, except that the seats run crosswise, and capable of accommodating from six to nine persons: that morning it held six, including the maid and nurse. Benson took the

* An American never uses the conversational term *luggage*, but always speaks of his *impediments* as *baggage*.

reins at a quarter-past five, and as the steamboat dock was situated at the very southern extremity of the city, and they had three miles of terrible pavement to traverse, besides nearly twelve of road, he arrived there just seven minutes before seven; at which hour, to the second, the good boat Swallow was to take wing. In a twinkling the horses were unharnessed and embarked; the carriage instantly followed them; and Harry, after assuring himself that all his property, animate and inanimate, was safely shipped, had still time to purchase, for his own and his friend's edification, the *Jacobin*, the *Blunder and Bluster*, the *Inexpressible*, and other popular papers, which an infinity of dirty boys were crying at the top of their not very harmonious voices.

'Our people do business pretty fast,' said he in a somewhat triumphant tone. 'How this would astonish them on the Continent! See there!' as a family, still later than his own, arrived with a small mountain of trunks, all of which made their way on board as if they had wings. 'When I travelled in Germany two years ago with Mrs. B. and her sister, we had eleven packages, and it used to take half an hour at every place to weigh and ticket them beforehand, notwithstanding which one or two would get lost every now and then. In my own country I have travelled in all directions with large parties, never have been detained five minutes for baggage, and never lost anything except once—an umbrella. Now we are going.'

The mate cried, 'All ashore!' the newsboys and apple-venders disappeared; the planks were drawn in; the long, spidery walking-beam began to play, and the Swallow had started with her five hundred passengers.

'Let us stroll around the boat; I want to show you how we get up these things here.'

The ladies' cabin on deck and the two general cabins below were magnificently furnished with the most expensive material, and in the last Parisian style, and this display and luxury were the more remarkable as the fare was but twelve shillings for a hundred and sixty miles. Ashburner admitted that the furniture was very elegant, but thought it out of place, and altogether too fine for the purpose.

'So you would say, probably, that the profuse and varied dinner we shall have is thrown away on the majority of the passengers, who bolt it in half-an-hour. But there are some who habitually appreciate the dinner, and the furniture: it does them good, and it does the others no harm,—nay, it does *them* good, too. The wild man from the West, who has but recently learned to walk on his hind legs, is dazzled with these sofas and mirrors, and respects them more than he would more ordinary furniture. At any rate, it's a fault on the right side. The furniture of an English hotel is enough to give a traveller a fit of the blues, such an extreme state of fustiness it is sure to be in. Did it ever strike you, by the way, how behindhand your countrymen are in the matter of hotels? When a traveller passes from England into Belgium (putting France out of the question) it is like going from Purgatory into Paradise.'

'I don't think I ever staid at a London hotel.'

'Of course not; when your governor was out of town, and you not with him, you had your club. This is exactly what all travellers in England complain of. Everything for the exclusive use of the natives is good—except the water, and of that you don't use much in the way of a beverage; everything particularly tending to the comfort of strangers and sojourners—as the hotels, for instance, is bad, dear, and uncomfortable. I don't think

you like to have foreigners among you, for your arrangements are calculated to drive them out of the country as fast as possible!'

'Perhaps we don't, as a general principle,' said Ashburner, smiling.

'Well, I won't say that it is not the wisest policy. We have suffered much by being too liberal to foreigners. But then you must not be surprised at what they say about you. However, it is not worth while to lose the view for our discussion. Come up-stairs and take a good look at the river of rivers.'

Ashburner felt no disposition to deny the beauty and grandeur of the Hudson. At first the shore was lined with beetling ramparts of traprock. After many miles of this, the clear water spread out into a great lake with apparently no egress. But on turning a promontory, the river stretched away nearly as wide as before, under wooded cliffs not dissimilar to those of the Rhine. Then came the picturesque Catskill mountains; and near these Harry was to stop, but Ashburner did not stop with him. At West Point the boat had taken up, among other passengers, two young officers of his acquaintance, then quartered in Canada. They were going to take the tour of the lakes, including, of course, Niagara, and offered Ashburner, if he would accompany them on this excursion first, to show him the lions of Canada afterwards. On consulting with Benson, he found that the trip would not occupy more than a month or five weeks, and that after that time the watering-place season would be at its height.

'And it will be an excuse for my staying with Carl till August,' Harry continued. 'The women are half crazy to be at Oldport already. I would rather stay at Ravenswood. We shall expect you there at the end of

July. But,' and here, for the first time since their acquaintance, Ashburner perceived a slight embarrassment in his manner, 'don't bring your friends.'

'Oh, dear, no!' said Ashburner, not comprehending what could have put such a thing into the other's head, or what was coming next.

'I don't mean to Ravenswood, but to Oldport; that is, if you can help their coming. To tell you the truth, your university men, and literary men generally, are popular enough here, but your army is in very bad odour. The young fellows who come down among us from Canada behave shockingly. They don't act like gentlemen or Christians.'

Ashburner hastened to assure him that Captain Blank and Lieutenant Dash were both gentlemen and Christians, in the ordinary acceptation of the terms, and had never been known to misconduct themselves in any way.

'Doubtless, inasmuch as they are your friends, but the general principle remains the same. So many of your young officers have misconducted themselves, that the *primâ facie* evidence is always against one of them, and he stands a chance of being coolly treated.'

Ashburner wanted to know what the young officers had done.

'Everything they could do to go counter to the habits and prejudices of the people among whom they were, and to show their contempt of American society; to act, in short, as if they were among uncivilized people. For instance; it is a custom at these watering-place hotels to dress for the *table-d' hôte*. Now I do not expect it altogether reasonable that a man should be expected to make his evening toilette by three in the afternoon, and, indeed, I do not strictly conform to the rule myself.

But these men came in flannel shirts and dirty shoes, and altogether in a state unfit for ladies' company. Perhaps, however, we were too fastidious in this. But what do you say to a youngster seating himself upon a piano in the public parlour, while a lady is playing on it?'

Ashburner allowed that it was rather unceremonious.

'By various similar acts, trivial, perhaps, individually, but forming a very disagreeable aggregate, these young men made themselves so unpopular, that one season the ladies, by common consent, refused to dance with any of them. But there is worse behind. These gentlemen, so stupid in a drawing-room, are sharp enough in borrowing money, and altogether oblivious of repaying it.'

Ashburner remembered the affair of Ensign Lawless, and made up his mind to undergo another repetition of it.

'I don't speak of my individual case; the thing has happened fifty times. I could tell of a dozen friends who have been victimized in this way during the last three years. In fact, I believe that your *jeunes militaires* have formed a league to avenge the Mississippi bondholders, and recover their lost money under the form of these nominal loans. You may think it poetic justice, but we New-Yorkers have no fancy to pay the Mississippians' debts in this way.'

It would be foreign to our present purpose to accompany Ashburner in his North-western and Canadian tour. Suffice it to say, that he returned by the first of August, very much pleased, having seen many things well worth seeing, and experienced no particular annoyance, except the one predicted by Benson, that he sometimes *had to take care of his servant.* Neither, shall we say much of his visit to Ravenswood, where,

indeed, he only spent a few hours, arriving there in the morning and leaving it in the afternoon of the same day, and had merely time to partake of a capital lunch, and to remark that his entertainer had a beautiful place and a handsome wife, and was something like his younger brother, but more resembling an Englishman than any American he had yet seen.

The party to Oldport was increased by the addition of Miss Vanderlyn, a tall, stylish girl, more striking than her sister, but less delicately beautiful. Though past twenty, she had been out only one season, having been kept back three years by various accidents. But though new to society, she had nothing of the book-muslin timidity about her; nor was she at all abashed by the presence of the titled foreigner. On the contrary, she addressed him with perfect ease of manner, in French, professing, as an apology for conversing in that language, a fear that he might not be able to understand her English,—*Parce que chez vous, on dit que nous autres Américaines, ne parlons pas l' Anglais comme il faut.*'

As we are not writing a handbook or geographical account of the Northern States, it will not be necessary to mention where the fashionable watering-place of Oldport Springs is situated—not even what State it is in; suffice it to say, that from Carl Benson's place thither was a day's journey, performed partly by steamboat, partly by rail, and the last forty miles by stage-coach, or as the Americans say, 'for shortness,' by stage. The water portion of their journey was soon over, nor did Ashburner much regret it, for he had been over this part of the route before on his way to Canada, and the river is not remarkably beautiful above the Catskill range.

On taking the cars, Benson seized the opportunity to enlighten his friend with a quantity of railroad statistics and gossip, such as, that the American trains averaged eighteen miles an hour, including stoppages,—about two miles short of the steamboat average; that they cost about one-fifth of an English road, or a dollar for a pound, which accounted for their deficiency in some respects; that there were more than seven thousand miles of railroad in the country; that there was no division of first, second, and third class, but that some lines had ladies' cars—that is to say, cars for the gentlemen with ladies, and the ladies without gentlemen—and some had separate cars for the ladies and gentlemen of colour; that there had been some attempts to get up smoking-cars after the German fashion, but the public mind was not yet fully prepared for it; that one of the southern lines had tried the experiment of introducing a *restaurant*, and other conveniences, with tolerable success; and other facts of more or less interest. Ashburner, for his part, on examining his ticket, found upon the back of it a list of all the stations on the route, with their times and distances—a very convenient arrangement; and he was also much amused at the odd names of some of the stations—Nineveh, Pompey, Africa, Cologne, and others equally incongruous.

'Don't be afraid of laughing,' said Benson, who guessed what he was smiling at. 'Whenever I am detained at a country tavern, if there duly happens to be a good-sized map of the United States there, I have enough to amuse me in studying the different styles of names in the different sections of the Union—different in style, but alike in impropriety. In our State, as you know, the fashion is for classical and oriental names. In New England there is a goodly amount of old English

appellations, but often sadly misapplied; for instance, an inland town will be called Falmouth, or Oldport, like the place we are going to.' The aboriginal names, often very harmonious, had been generally displaced, except in Maine, where they are particularly long and jaw-breaking, such as *Winnipiscogger* and *Chargogagog*. Still we have some very pretty Indian names left in New York; *Ontario*, for instance, and *Oneida*, and *Niagara*, which you who have been there know is

Pronounced Niágara,
To rhyme with *staggerer*,
And not Niagára,
To rhyme with *starer*.'

'What does *Niagara* mean?'

'*Broken water*, I believe; but one gets so many different meanings for these names, from those who profess to know more or less about the native dialects, that you can never be certain. For instance, a great many will tell you, on Chateaubriand's authority, that *Mississippi* means *Father of waters*. Some years ago, one of our Indian scholars stated that this was an error; that the literal meaning of Mississippi was *old-big-strong*—not quite so poetic an appellation. I asked Albert Gallatin about it at the time—he was considered our best man on such subjects—and he told me that the word, or words, for the name is made up of two, signified *the entire river*. This is a fair specimen of the answers you get. I never had the same explanation of an Indian name given me by two men who pretended to understand the Indian languages.'

'What rule does a gentleman adopt in naming his country-seat when he acquires a new one, or is there any rule?'

'There are two natural and proper expedients, one to take the nearest aboriginal name that is pretty and practicable, the other to adopt the name from some natural feature. Of this latter we have two very neat examples in the residences of our two greatest statesmen, Clay and Webster, which are called *Ashland* and *Marshfield*—appellations exactly descriptive of the places. But very often mere fancy names are adopted, and frequently in the worst possible taste, by people too who have great taste in other respects. I wanted my brother to call this place Carlsruhe—that would have been literally appropriate, though sounding oddly at first. But as it belonged originally to his father-in-law, it seemed but fair that his wife should have the naming of it, and she was *so* fond of the Bride of Lammermoor! Well, I hope Carl will set up a few crows some day, just to give a little colour to the name. But, after all, what's in the name? We are to stop at Constantinople, if they give us a good supper and bed there (and they will unless the hotel is much altered for the worse within two years), they may call the town Beelzebub for me.'

But Benson reckoned without his host. They were fated to pass the night, not at Constantinople, but at the rising village of Hardscrabble, consisting of a large hotel and a small blacksmith's shop.

The *contretemps* happened in this wise. The weather was very hot—it always is from the middle of June to the middle of September—but this day had been particularly sultry, and towards evening oppressed nature found relief in a thunder-storm, and such a storm! Ashburner, though anything but a nervous man, was not without some anxiety, and the ladies were in a sad fright; particularly Mrs. Benson, who threatened hysterics, and required a large expenditure of Cologne and

caresses to bring her round. At last the train came to a full stop at Hardscrabble, about thirty-six miles on the wrong side of Constantinople. Even before the usual three minutes halt was over our travellers suspected some accident; their suspicions where confirmed when the three minutes extended to ten, and ultimately the conductor announced that just beyond this station half-a-mile of the road had been literally washed away, so that further progress was impossible. Fortunately by this time the rain had so far abated that the passengers were able to pass from the shelter of the cars (there was no covered way at the station) to that of the spacious hotel *stoop* without being very much wetted. Benson recollected that there was a canal at no great distance, which, though comparatively disused since the establishment of the railroad, still had some boats on it, and he thought it probable that they might finish their journey in this way—not a very comfortable or expeditious one, but better than standing still. It appeared, however, on inquiry, that the canal was also put *hors de combat* by the weather, and nothing was to be done that way. Only two courses remained, either to go back to Clinton from which they had started, or to remain for the night where they were.

'This hotel ought to be able to accommodate us all,' remarked a fellow-passenger near them.

He might well say so. The portico under which they stood (built of the purest white pine, and modelled after that of a Grecian temple with eight columns) fronted at least eighty feet. The house was several stories high, and, if the front were anything more than a mere shell, must contain rooms for two hundred persons. How the building came into its present situation was a mystery to Ashburner; it looked as if it had been transported

bodily from some large town, and set down alone in the wilderness. The probability is, that some speculators, judging from certain signs that a town was likely to arise there soon, had built the hotel so as to be all ready for it.

There was no need to question the landlord; he had already been diligently assuring every one that he could accommodate all the passengers, who indeed did not exceed a hundred in number.

Logicians tell us, that a great deal of the trouble and misunderstanding which exists in this naughty world, arises from men not defining their terms in the outset. The landlord of Hardscrabble had evidently some peculiar ideas of his own as to the meaning of the term *accommodate*. The real state of the case was, that he had any quantity of rooms, and a tolerably liberal supply of bedsteads, but his stock of bedding was by no means in proportion; and he was, therefore, compelled to multiply it by process of division, giving the hair mattress to one, the feather bed to another, the straw bed to a third; and so with the pillows and bolsters as far as they would go. This was rather a long process, even with American activity, especially as some of the hands employed were temporarily called off to attend to the supper table.

The meal which was prepared and eaten with great promptitude, was a mixture of tea and supper. Very good milk, pretty good tea, and pretty bad coffee, represented the drinkables; and for solids, there was a plentiful provision of excellent bread and butter, new cheese, dried beef in very thin slices, or rather *chips*, gingerbread, dough-nuts, and other varieties of homemade cake, sundry preserves, and some pickles. The waiters were young women—some of them very pretty and lady-like. The Bensons kept up a conversation with each other and

Ashburner in French, which he suspected to be a customary practice of 'our set' when in public, as indeed it was, one which tended not a little to make them unpopular. A well-dressed man opposite looked so fiercely at them, that the Englishman thought he might have partially comprehended their discourse and taken an offence at it till he was in a measure re-assured by seeing him eat pound-cake and cheese together—a singularity of taste about which he could not help making a remark to Benson.

'Oh, that's nothing,' said Harry. 'Did you never, when you were on the lakes, see them eat ham and molasses? It is said to be a western practice: I never was there; but I'll tell you what I *have* seen. A man with cake, cheese, smoked-beef, and preserves, all on his plate together, and paying attention to them indiscriminately. He was not an American either, but a Creole Frenchman of New Orleans, who had travelled enough to know better.'

Soon after supper most of the company seemed inclined bedwards; but there were no signs of beds for some time. Benson's party, who were more amused than fatigued by their evening's experience, spread the carpet of resignation, and lit the cigar of philosophy. All the passengers did not take it so quietly. One tall, melancholy-faced man, who looked as if he required twice the ordinary amount of sleep, was especially anxious to know 'where they were going to put him.'

'Don't be afraid, sir,' said the landlord, as he shot across the room on some errand; 'we'll tell you before you go to bed.' With which safe prediction the discontented one was fain to content himself.

At length, about ten, or half past, the rooms began to be in readiness, and their occupants to be marched off to

them in squads of six or eight at a time,—the long corridors and tall staircases of the hotel requiring considerable pioneering and guidance. Benson's party came among the last. Having examined the room assigned to the ladies, Harry reported it to contain one bed and half a washstand; from which he and Ashburner had some misgivings as to their own accommodation, but were not exactly prepared for what followed, when a small boy with a tallow candle and face, escorted them up three flights of stairs into a room containing two small beds and a large spittoon, and not another single article of furniture.

'I say, boy!' quoth Benson, in much dudgeon, turning to their chamberlain, 'suppose we want to wash in the morning, what are we to do?'

'I don't know, sir,' answered the boy; and depositing the candle on the floor, he disappeared in the darkness.

'By Jove!' ejaculated the fastidious youth, 'there isn't as much as a hook in the wall to hang one's coat on. It's lucky we brought up our carpet bags with us, else we should have to look out a clean spot on the floor for our clothes.'

Ashburner was not very much disconcerted. He had travelled in so many countries, notwithstanding his youth, that he could pass his nights anyhow. In fact he had never been at a loss for sleep in his life, except on one occasion, when, in Galway, a sofa was assigned to him at one side of a small parlour, on the other side of which three Irish gentlemen were making a night of it.

So they said their prayers, and went to bed, like good boys. But their slumbers were not unbroken. Ashburner dreamed that he was again in Venice, and that the mosquitoes of that delightful city, of whose venom-

ousness and assiduity he retained shuddering recollections, were making an onslaught upon him in great numbers; while Benson awoke towards morning with a great outcry: in apology for which he solemnly assured his friend, that two seconds before he was in South Africa, where a lion of remarkable size and ferocity had caught him by the leg. And on rising, they discovered some spots of blood on the bed-clothes, showing that their visions had not been altogether without foundation in reality.

The Hardscrabble hotel, grand in its general outlines, had overlooked the trifling details of wash-stands and chamber crockery. Such of these articles as it *did* possess, were very properly devoted to the use of the ladies; and accordingly Ashburner and Benson, and forty-five more, performed their matutinal ablutions over a tin bason in the bar-room, where Harry astonished the natives by the production of his own particular towel and pocket-comb. The weather had cleared up beautifully, the railroad was repaired, and the train ready to start as soon as breakfast was over. After this meal, as miscellaneous as their last night's supper, while the passengers were discharging their reckoning, Ashburner noticed that his friend was unusually fussy and consequential, asked several questions, and made several remarks in a loud tone, and altogether seemed desirous of attracting attention. When it came to his turn to pay, he told out the amount, not in the ordinary dirty bills, but in hard, ringing half-dollars, which had the effect of drawing still further notice upon him.

'Five dollars and a quarter,' said Benson, in a measured and audible tone; 'and, landlord, here's a quarter extra.'

The landlord looked up in surprise; so did the two or three men standing nearest Harry.

'It's to buy beef with, to feed 'em. Feed 'em well, now, don't forget!'

'Feed 'em! feed who?' and the host looked as if he thought his customer crazy.

'Feed *who?* Why, look here!' and bending over the counter, Harry uttered a portentous monosyllable, in a pretended whisper, but really as audible to the bystanders as a stage aside. Three or four of those nearest exploded.

'Yes, feed 'em *well* before you put anybody into your beds again, or you'll have to answer for the death of a fellow-christian some day, that's all. Good morning!' And taking his wife under his arm, Benson stalked off to the cars with a patronizing farewell nod, amid a sympathetic roar, leaving the host irresolute whether to throw a decanter after him, or to join in the general laugh.

BENSON MAKING A SHERRY COBLER.

CHAPTER V.

LIFE AT A WATERING-PLACE—OLDPORT SPRINGS.

'HOLD on a minute,' said Harry, as they were about to take the stage, after a very fair three-o'clock dinner at Constantinople (the Occidental, not the Oriental city of that name); 'there goes an acquaintance of ours whom you must know. He has arrived by the Westfield train, doubtless.'

Away sped Benson after the acquaintance, arm-in-arm with whom he shortly returned, and with all the exultation of an American who has brought two lions into the same cage, introduced M. le Vicomte Vincent Le Roi to the Hon. Edward Ashburner.

Ashburner was rather puzzled at Le Roi, whose personal appearance did not in any way answer either to his originally conceived idea of a Frenchman, or to the live specimens he had thus far met with. The Vicomte looked more like an Englishman, or perhaps like the very best kind of Irishman. He was a middle-sized man of thirty or thereabout, with brown hair and a florid complexion; and very quietly dressed, his clothes being neither obtrusively new nor cut with any ultra-artistic pretension. Except his wearing a moustache and (of course) not speaking English, there was nothing continental about his outward man, or the first impression he gave of himself. Fortunately, he was also bound for the

springs, so that Ashburner would have abundant opportunity to study his character, if so disposed.

The stage in which our tourists were to embark was not unlike a French diligence, except that it had but one compartment instead of three; in which compartment there were three seats, and on each seat more or less room for three persons, and two more could sit with the driver. All the baggage was carried on the top. The springs were made like coach springs, or C-springs, as they are always called in America (just as in England a pilot-coat is called a P-jacket), only they were upright and perpendicular to the axletree instead of curving; and the leathern belts connected with them, on which the carriage swung, were of the thickest and toughest description. As the party, with the addition of Le Roi, amounted to eight, Benson managed, by a little extra expenditure of tin and trouble, to secure the whole of one vehicle, and for the still greater accommodation of the ladies and child, the gentlemen were to sit on the box, two at a time by turns. Benson's first object was to get hold of the reins, for which end he began immediately to talk around the driver about things in general. From the price of horses they diverged to the prospects of various kinds of business, and thence slap into the politics of the country. The driver was a stubborn Locofoco, and Benson did not disdain to enter into an elaborate argument with him. Ashburner, who then occupied the other box-seat, was astonished at the man's statistical knowledge, the variety of information he possessed upon local topics, and his accurate acquaintance with the government and institutions of his country. It occurred to him to prompt Benson, through the convenient medium of French, to sound him about England and European politics. This Harry did, not immediately, lest he might

suspect the purport of their conversational interlude, but by a dexterous approach to the point after sufficient preliminary; and it then appeared that he had lumped 'the despotic powers of the old world' in a heap together, and supposed the Queen of England to be on a par with the Czar of Russia, as regarded her personal authority and privileges. However, when Benson set him right as to the difference between a limited and an absolute monarchy, he took the information in very good part, listened to it attentively, and evidently made a mental note of it for future reference.

The four-horse team was a good strong one, but the stage with its load heavy enough, and the roads, after the recent storm, still heavier, besides being a succession of hills. The best they could do was to make six miles an hour, and they would not have made three, but for a method of travelling down hill, entirely foreign to European ideas on the subject. When they arrived at the summit there was no talk of putting on the drag, nor any drag to put on, but away the horses went, first at a rapid trot, and soon at full gallop; by which means the equipage acquired sufficient momentum to carry it part of the way up the next hill before the animals relapsed into the slow walk which the steepness of the ascent imposed upon them. Indeed, this part of the route would have been a very tedious one (for the country about was almost entirely devoid of interest), had it not been for Le Roi, who came out in great force. He laughed at everything and with everybody; told stories, and good ones, continuously, and only ceased telling stories to break forth into song. In fine, he amused the ladies so much that when he took his turn on the box they missed him immediately, and sent Benson outside again on the first opportunity; whereat the Vicomte, being

very much flattered, waxed livelier and merrier than ever, and kept up a constant fire of jest and ditty. As to Ashburner, who had a great liking for fresh air, and an equal horror of a small child in a stage-coach, he remained outside the whole time; for which the fair passengers set him down as an insensible youth, who did not know how to appreciate good company: until the evening becoming somewhat chilly by comparison with the very hot day they had undergone, both he and Harry took refuge in the interior, and a very jolly party they all made.

While they were outside together, Benson had been giving Ashburner some details about Le Roi—in fact, a succinct biography of him; for be it noted, that every New-Yorker is able to produce off-hand a minute history of every person, native or foreign, at all known in society; for which ability he is indebted partly to the inquisitive habits of the people, partly to their communicative disposition, partly to their remarkable memory of small particulars, and partly to a fine imagination and power of invention, which must be experienced to be fully appreciated. Benson, we say, had been telling his friend the story of his other friend or acquaintance; how he was of good family and no fortune; how he had written three novels and three thousand or more *feuilletons;* how he had travelled into some out-of-the-way part of Poland, where no one had ever been before or since, and about which he was, therefore, at liberty to say what he pleased; how, besides his literary capabilities, such as they were, he played, and sang, and danced, and sketched—all very well for an amateur; how he was altogether a very agreeable and entertaining man, and, as such, was supposed to have been sent out by a sort of mutual-benefit subscription-club, which existed at Paris

for the purpose of marrying its members to heiresses in different countries. Ashburner had once heard rumors of such a club in Germany, but was never able to obtain any authentic details concerning it, or to determine whether it was anything more than a traveller's traditionary legend. Even Benson was at fault here, and, indeed, he seemed rather to tell the club part of the story as a good joke than to believe it seriously himself.

As they approached the termination of their journey, their talk naturally turned more and more on the Springs. The Vicomte was in possession of the latest advices thence; the arrivals, and expected arrivals, and the price-current of stock; that is, of marriageable young gentlemen, and all other matters of gossip; how the whole family of the Robinsons were there in full force, with an unlimited amount of Parisian millinery; how Gerard Ludlow was driving four-in-hand, and Löwenberg had given his wife no end of jewelry; how Mrs. Harrison, who ought not to have been (not being of our set), nevertheless *was* the great lioness of the season; how Miss Thompson, the belle expectant, had renounced the Springs altogether, and shut herself up at home somewhere among the mountains—all for unrequited love of Hamilton Bell, as was charitably reported; last, but not least, how Tom Edwards had invented six new figures for the German cotillion. Ashburner did not at first altogether understand the introduction of this personage into such good company, supposing from his familiar abbreviation and Terpsichorean attributes, that he must be the fashionable dancing-master of Oldport, or perhaps of New-York; but he was speedily given to understand that, on the contrary, Mr. Edwards was a gay bachelor of good family and large fortune, who, in addition to gambling, intriguing, and other pleasant propen-

sities, had an insatiable passion for the dance, and was accustomed to rotate morning, noon, and night, whenever he was not gambling, &c., as aforesaid. 'And,' continued Benson, 'I'll lay you any bet you please, that the first thing we see on arriving at our hotel will be Tom Edwards dancing the Polka; unless, indeed, he happen to be dancing the Redowa.'

'Very likely,' said Mrs. Benson, 'seeing we shall arrive there at ten o'clock, and this is a ball night.'

Both Harry and his wife were right; they arrived at half-past ten, just as the ball was getting into full swing. On the large portico in front of the large hotel opened a large room, with large windows down to the floor,—the dining-room of the establishment, now cleared for dancing purposes. All the idlers of Oldport, male and female, black and white, congregated at these windows and thronged the portico; and almost into the very midst of this crowd our party was shot, baggage and all. While Ashburner was looking out of a confused heap of people and luggage, he heard one of the assistant loafers say to another, 'Look at Mr. Edwards!' Profiting by the information not originally intended for him, he followed the direction of the speaker's nose, and beheld a little showily-dressed man flying down the room with a large showily-dressed woman, going the *poursuite* of the Redowa at a terrific rate. So that, literally, the first thing he saw in Oldport was Tom Edwards dancing. But there was no opportunity to make a further study of this, 'one of the most remarkable men among us,' for the party had to look up their night quarters. Benson had dispatched in advance to Mr. Grabster, proprietor of the Bath Hotel at Oldport Springs, a very particular letter, stating the number of his party, the time he meant to be there, and the number of rooms he wanted, and had

also sent his horses on ahead; but though the animals had arrived safe and found stable-room, there was no preparation for their master. Ashburner, at the request of the ladies, followed Benson into the office (for the Bath Hotel being, nominally at least, the first house in the place, had its bar-room and office separate), and found Harry in earnest expostulation with a magnificently-dressed individual, whom he took for Mr. Grabster himself, but who turned out to be only that high and mighty gentleman's head bookkeeper. The letter had been dispatched so long beforehand, that, even at the rate of American country posts, it ought to have arrived, but no one knew anything about it. Both the young men suspected—uncharitably, perhaps, but not altogether unnaturally—that Mr. Grabster and his aids, finding a prospect of a full season, had not thought it worth their while to trouble themselves about the application, or to keep any rooms. Ashburner suggested trying another hotel, but the roads were muddy and vehicles scarce at that time of night, so that altogether there seemed a strong probability of their being compelled to 'camp out' on the portico. But it was not in Benson to 'give it up so.' He possessed, as we have already hinted, that faculty so alarmingly common in his country, which polite people call oratory, and vulgar people the 'gift of the gab;' and he was not the man to throw away the opportunity of turning any of his gifts to account. Warming with his subject, he poured out upon the gorgeously-attiredMr. Black such a flood of conciliatory and expostulatory eloquence, that that gentleman absolutely contrived to find some accommodation for them. The ladies, child, and servants were bundled together into one tolerably large room, in the third story. Benson had a sort of corner-cupboard in the fourth,

that might, perhaps, have accommodated a mouse with a small family; and to Ashburner and Le Roi were assigned two small chambers in the fifth. As to the baggage, that was all piled up in the office, with the exception of a few indispensable articles. Supper was out of the question, there being no room to eat it in because of the dancers. The ladies did not want supper; they only regretted not being able to unpack their trunks and dress for the ball then and there going on: their eyes lighted up at the sound of the music, and their little feet began to beat the floor incontinently. The gentlemen took a drink all round by way of substitute for something more solid. Ashburner had mounted to his dormitory—no small journey—and was sitting on his bed, wishing he had some contrivance for pulling off all his clothes at once without the trouble of removing them piece by piece, when he heard in the passage the voice of Le Roi, *quantum matatus ab illo!* The Vicomte had sworn up all his own language, and was displaying a knowledge of English expletives that quite surprised his fellow-traveller. On investigation, the cause of his wrath proved to be this. A semi-civilized Irish waiter had shown him to No. 296, in accordance with Mr. Black's directions. But Mr. Black, in the multiplicity of his affairs, had forgotten that No. 296 was already tenanted, to wit, by a Western traveller, who did, indeed, intend to quit it by an early stage next morning, but had not the least idea of giving up his quarters before that time; and accordingly, as if from a presentiment that some attempt would be made to dislodge him, had, in addition to the ordinary not very strong fastenings of the door, so barricaded it with trunks and furniture, that it could have stood a considerable amount of siege. The waiter had gone off, leaving Le Roi to shift for himself.

Bells were scarce in the upper stories of the Bath Hotel, nor was there any light throughout the long corridor except the one tallow candle which his useless guide had deposited on the floor. Utterly upset at the idea of having to tramp down four pair of stairs and back again in search of accommodation, the unlucky Gaul was seeking a momentary relief in the manner above stated, when Ashburner came to the rescue. His bed happened to be rather a large one—so large, comparatively, that it was a mystery how it had ever found its way into the little room, the four walls of which seemed to have grown or been built around it; and this bed he instantly proposed to share with Le Roi for the night. The Frenchman *merciéd*, and couldn't think of such a thing for five minutes, edging into the room and pulling off his coat and boots all the time; then he gave an exemplification of *cessante causa*, for all his rage vanished in a moment, and he was the same exuberantly good-natured and profusely loquacious man that he had been all day. On he streamed in a perpetual flow of talk long after both were in bed, until Ashburner began to feel as a man might to whom some fairy had given a magical instrument which discoursed sweet music at first, but could never be made to stop playing. And when at length the Vicomte, having lighted on the subject of women, poured out an infinity of adventures with ladies of all countries, of all which stories Vincent Le Roi was, of course, the hero, his fellow-traveller, unable to help being disgusted at his vanity and levity, turned round to the wall, and without considering whether he was acting in accordance with *bienseance*, fell fast asleep in the midst of one of the most thrilling narratives.

When Ashburner awoke the next morning, the first thing he was conscious of was Le Roi talking. It

required very little exercise of the imagination to suppose that he had been going on uninterruptedly all night. Afterwards he became aware of a considerable disturbance, evidently originating in the lower story of the house, but sufficiently audible all over it, which he put down to the account of numerous new arrivals. By the time they had completed their toilettes (which did not take very long, for the room being just under the roof, was of a heat that made it desirable for them to evacuate it as soon as possible), Benson made his appearance. He had obtained possession of his baggage, and arrayed himself in the extreme of summer costume:—a white grass-cloth coat, about the consistency of blotting-paper, so transparent that the lilac pattern of his check shirt was distinctly visible through the arms of it; white duck vest, white drilled trousers, long-napped white hat, a speckled cravat to match his shirt, and highly varnished shoes, with red and white striped silk stockings,—altogether very fresh and innocent-looking. He came to show them the principal spring, which was not far from the hotel—just a pleasant walk before breakfast, though it was not likely they would meet many people so early on account of last night's ball.

'I am afraid your quarters were not very comfortable,' said Harry, as the three strolled arm-in-arm down a sufficiently sandy road; 'but we shall have better rooms before dinner to-day.'

'The house must be very full,' Ashburner remarked; 'and were there not a great many arrivals this morning? From the noise I heard, I thought at least fifty people had come.'

'No: I glanced at the book, and there were not a dozen names on it. Hallo!' and Benson swore roundly

in Spanish, apparently forgetting that his friend understood that language.

Ashburner looked up, and saw meeting them a large Frenchman and a small Irish boy. The Frenchman had an immense quantity of hair of all sorts on his face, nearly hiding his features, which, as what was visible of them had a particularly villanous air, was about the best thing he could have done to them; and on his head he carried a something of felt, which indisputably proved the proposition that matter may exist without form. The Irish youth sported a well-meant but not a very successful attempt at a moustache, and a black cloth cap pitched on one side of his head. In other respects they were attired in the usual costume of an American snob; that is to say, a dress-coat and a full suit of black at seven in the morning. Ashburner noticed that Benson spit ostentatiously while passing them; and after passing he swore again, this time in downright English.

Le Roi had seen in his acquaintance with European watering-places a goodly amount of scamps and blacklegs, and Ashburner was not without some experience of the sort, so that they were not disposed to be curious about one blackguard more or less in a place of the kind; but these two fellows had such a look of unmitigated rascality, that both the foreigners glanced inquiringly at their friend, and were both on the point of asking some question, when he anticipated their desire.

'God forgive me for swearing, but it is too provoking to meet these loafers in respectable quarters. The ancients used to think their journey spoiled if they met an unclean animal on starting, and I feel as if my whole stay here would go wrong after meeting these animals the the first thing in the first morning.'

'*Mais qui sont ils donc, ces vauriens?*' asked Le Roi.

'The Frenchman is a deported convict, who is doing us the honour to serve out his time here; the Irishman is a refugee, I believe. They have come here to report for *The Sewer*.'

They cooled their virtuous indignation at the spring and were returning.

'Hallo, Benson! hallo! I thought that was you!' shouted somebody, a quarter of a mile off, from the hotel steps.

'Ah,' said Harry, 'I understand now why you heard so much noise this morning. Bird Simpson has arrived.'

Mr. Simpson, popularly known as 'the bird' (*why* no one could tell exactly, but people often get such names attached to them for some inexplicable reason), came on a half-run to meet them. He was a tall, showy, and rather handsome, though not particularly graceful man; very flashily got up in a blue cutaway with gilt buttons, wide blue stripes down the sides of his white trousers, a check shirt of enormous crimson pattern, and a red and white cravat; no waistcoat, and wide embroidered braces, the work of some lady friend. He seemed to have dressed himself on the principle of the tricolor, and to have carried it out in his face—his cheeks being very red, his eyes very blue, and his hair very white. After having 'pump-handled' Benson's arm for some time, he made an attack on Le Roi, whom he just knew by name, and inquired if he had just come *de l'autre côté*, meaning the other side of the Atlantic, according to a common New-York idiom; but the Vicomte not unnaturally took it to mean from the other side of the road, and gave a corresponding answer in English as felicitous as Mr. Simpson's French. Then he digressed upon Ashburner, whom he saw to be an Englishman, in so pointed a manner that Benson was obliged to introduce them; and the intro-

duction was followed by an invitation on Simpson's part to the company to take a drink, which they did, somewhat to the consternation of the Frenchman, who knew not what to make of iced brandy and mint before breakfast. Then Simpson, having primed himself for the morning meal, set about procuring it, and his departure visibly relieved Benson, who was clearly not proud of his acquaintance. Le Roi also went after his breakfast, taking care to get as far as possible from the corner of the room where Simpson was.

'There,' said Benson, 'is a very fair specimen of 'second set.' He is B, No. 1, rather a great man in his own circle, and imports French goods. To hear him talk about French actresses and eating-houses you would think him a ten years' resident of that city, instead of having been there perhaps four times in his life, a week each time. But you know we Americans have a wonderful faculty of seeing a great deal in a little time. Just so with Italy; he was there two months, and professes to know all about the country and the people. But he doesn't know the set abroad or at home. Sometimes you meet him at a ball, where he does his duty about supper time; but you will never see him dancing with, or talking to, the ladies who are 'of us.' Nevertheless, they will avail themselves of his services sometimes, when they want to buy silks at wholesale prices, or to have something smuggled for them; for he is the best-natured man in the world. And, after all, he is not more given to scandal than the exquisites, and is a great deal honester and truer. Once I caught a fever out on the north-eastern boundary and had not a friend with me, or any means of getting help. This man nursed me like a brother, and put himself to no end of trouble for me until we could fetch Carl on. I would certainly rather have been

under such an obligation to some other men I know than to Simpson; but having incurred it, I do not think it can be justly paid off with a 'glad-to-know-you-when-I'm-at-Bath-again' acquaintance; and I feel bound to be civil to him, though he does bother me immensely at times with his free-and-easy habits,—walking into my parlour with his hat on and cigar in his mouth; chaffing me or my wife, in language about as elegant as an omnibus driver's; or pawing ladies about in a way that he takes for gallantry. Talking of ladies, I wish mine would show themselves for breakfast. Ah, here are two men you must know; they are good types of two classes of our beaux—the considerably French and the slightly English—the former class the more numerous, you are probably aware. Mr. Bell, Mr. Ashburner—Mr. Ashburner, Mr. Sumner.'

Hamilton Bell was a tall, handsome man, some few years on the wrong side of thirty, broader-shouldered and deeper-chested than the ordinary American model, elaborately but quietly dressed, without any jewelry or showy patterns. There was something very Parisian in his get-up and manner, yet you would never take him for a Frenchman, still less for a Frenchified-Englishman. But he had the look of a man who had lived in a gay capital, and quite fast enough for his years; his fine hair was beginning to go on the top of his head, and his face wanted freshness and colour. His manner, slightly reserved at first, rapidly warmed into animation, and his large dark eyes gave double expression to whatever he said. His very smallest talk was immensely impressive. He would tell a stranger that he was happy to make his acquaintance with an air that implied all the Spaniard's *mi casa a la disposicion de usted*, and meant about as much; and when you saw him from the *parquet* of the

Opera talking to some young lady in the boxes, you would have imagined that he was making a dead set at her, when in fact he was only uttering some ordinary meteorological observation. Apart from his knack of looking and talking sentiment, he had no strongly-marked taste or hobby: danced respectably, but not often; knew enough about horses to pick out a good one when he wanted a mount for a riding-party; drank good wine habitually, without being pedantic about the different brands of it; and read enough of the current literature of the day to be able to keep up a conversation if he fell among a literary circle. He was not a marrying man, partly because his income, sufficient to provide him with all bachelor luxuries, was not large enough to support a wife handsomely; partly because that a man should tie himself to one woman for life was a thing he could not conceive, much less practise: but he very much affected the society of the softer sex, and was continually amusing himself with some young girl or young wife. He rather preferred the latter—it was less compromising; still he had no objection to victimize an innocent *débutante*, and leave her more or less broken-hearted. (It must be observed, however, for the credit of American young ladies, that they are not addicted to dying of this complaint, so often fatal in novels; many of Hamilton's victims had recovered and grown absolutely fat upon it, and married very successfully.) Wherever there was a *fiancée*, or a probable *fiancée*, or a married belle with an uxorious husband,—in short, wherever he could make himself look dangerous and another man jealous or foolish, he came out particularly strong; at the same time, being very adroit and not over belligerent, he always contrived to stop or get out of the way in time if the other party showed open signs of displeasure.

Frank Sumner was rather shorter than Bell, rather younger, and rather more dressed. He had the same broad shoulders, which in America, where most of the beaux are either tall and thin or short and thin, find favour with the ladies; just as blondes create a sensation in southern countries, because they are so seldom seen. In almost all other particulars the two men were totally unlike, and Sumner might have passed for an English gentleman put into French clothes. He was reserved in his conversation, and marked in the expression of his likes and dislikes. With no more intention of marrying than Bell, he took care never to make love to any woman, and if any woman made love to him he gave her no encouragement. He was not richer than Bell, not so good-looking, and certainly not so clever, but more respected and more influential; for the solid and trustworthy parts of his character, backed by a bull-dog courage and an utter imperturbability, got the better in the long run of the other's more brilliant qualities.

Some of these things Ashburner observed for himself, some of them Benson told him after Bell and Sumner, who did *not* ask the stranger to take a drink, had passed on. He had noticed that the latter's manner, though perfectly civil, was very cold compared with the *empressement* which the former had exhibited.

'He doesn't like your countrymen,' said Harry, 'and nothing can vex him more than to be told, what is literally the truth, that he resembles an Englishman in many respects. I believe it is about the only thing that *can* vex him. What an immovable man it is! I have seen a woman throw a lighted cigar into his face, and another cut off one end of his moustache (that was when we were both younger, and used to see some queer

scenes abroad), and a servant drop half a tureen of soup over him, and none of these things stirred him. Once at Naples, I recollect, he set our chimney on fire. Such a time we had of it; every one in the house tumbling into our room, from the *piccolo*, with no coat and half a pair of pants, to the proprietor in his dressing-gown and spectacles—women calling on the Virgin, men running after water—and there sat Frank, absolutely radiating off so much coolness that he imparted a portion of it to me, and we sat through the scene as quietly as if they had only been laying the cloth for dinner. A rum pair they must have thought us! The day before we had astonished the waiter by lighting brandy over a pudding. I suppose we left them under the impression that the Anglo-Saxons had a propensity to set fire to everything they came in contact with.'

'It is very odd that so many of your people should be afraid of resembling us, and take the French type for imitation in preference to the English. The original feeling of gratitude to France for having assisted you in the war of independence does not seem sufficient to account for it.'

'Certainly not; for that feeling would naturally diminish in each succeeding generation, whereas the Gallicism of our people is on the increase,—in fact its origin is of comparatively recent date. But we really *are* more like the French in some senses. Politically, the American is very Anglo-Saxon. So he is morally; but socially, so far as you can separate society from morals, he is very French. The Englishman's first idea of his duty in society is non-interference; the Frenchman's and American's, amusement. An Englishman does not think it his business to endeavour to amuse the company in which he happens to be; an Englishwoman does not think it

her duty to make any attempt to entertain a man who is introduced to her. A Frenchman will rather talk trash, *knowing that he is talking trash*, than remain silent and let others remain silent. So will an American. But an Englishman, unless he is sure of saying something to the point, will hold his tongue. The imperturbable self-possession of the English gentleman is not generally understood by us, any more than it is by the French. His minding his own business is attributed to selfish indifference. The picture that half our people form of an Englishman is, a heavy, awkward man, very badly dressed, courageous, and full of learning; but devoid of all the arts and graces of life, and caring for nobody but himself. It is a great pity that there is not a better understanding; but, unfortunately, the best Englishmen who come here seldom stay long enough to be appreciated, and the best Americans who go to England seldom stay there long enough to appreciate the country. Whenever an American chances to stay some years among you, he ends by liking England very much; but it is very seldom that he has any provocation, unless compelled by business, to stay some years, for acquaintances are harder to make in London than in any other city, while it has less resources for a man without acquaintances than any other city—besides being so dear. But here comes the ladies *at* last; now for breakfast.'

Breakfast was the best managed meal at the Bath Hotel. The *table d'hôte* began at half-past seven, but fresh relays of rolls and eggs, ham, chops, and steaks, were always to be obtained until half-past ten or eleven by those who had interest with the waiters. After breakfast the company went to work promenading. There was a very wide hall running through the hotel, and up and down this, and up and down the two broad-

est sides of the portico, all the world walked—'our set' being conspicuous from the elegance of their morning costume. One side of the portico was devoted to the gentlemen and their cigars, and there Ashburner and Benson took a turn, leaving with the ladies Le Roi and a small beau or two who had joined them. Suddenly Benson pressed his friend's arm.

'Here comes *really* 'one of the most remarkable men'—the very god of the dance; behold Tom Edwards!'

Ashburner beheld a little man, about five feet and a half high. If he could have stood on his bushy black beard it would have lifted him full three inches higher. Besides this beard he cherished a small moustache, very elaborately curling-tongsed at the ends into the shape of half a lyre. Otherwise he had not much hair on his head, but what he had was very carefully brushed. His features were delicate, and not without intelligence, but terribly worn by dissipation. To look at his figure you would take him for a boy of nineteen; to look at his face, for a man of thirty: he was, probably, about half-way between the two ages. Everything about him was wonderfully neat: a white coat and hat, like Benson's; cream-coloured waistcoat, and pearl-coloured trousers; miraculously small feet in resplendent boots, looking more like a doll's extremities than a man's; a French kid glove on one of his little hands and on the other a sapphire ring, so large that Ashburner wondered how the little man could carry it, and thought that he should, like Juvenal's dandies, have kept a lighter article for summer wear. Then he had a watch-chain of great balls of blue enamel, with about two pounds of chatelaine charms dependent therefrom; and delicate little enamelled studs, with sleeve-buttons to match. Altogether he was a won-

derful lion, considering his size. Even Benson had not the courage to stop and introduce his friend until he passed the great dancer more than once, in silent admiration, and with a respectful bow.

And as they passed he detailed to Ashburner, with his usual biographical accuracy, the history of Tom Edwards, which he had begun in the stage-coach. Tom had been left in his infancy with a fortune, and without a father, to be brought up by relatives who had an unlucky preference of Parisian to American life. Under their auspices and those of other Mentors, whom he found in that gay capital, his progress was so rapid, that at a very early age he was known as the banker of two or three distinguished *lorettes*, and the pet pupil of the renowned Cellarius. Indeed, he had lived so much in the society of that gentleman and his dancing-girls, that he took the latter for his standard of female society, and had a tendency to behave to all womankind as he behaved to them. To married ladies he talked slightly refined *double-entendre:* to young ladies he found it safest to say very little, his business and pleasure being to dance with them; and if they did not dance, he gave them up for uncivilized beings, and troubled himself no further about them. Of old people of either sex he took no further notice than to order them out of the way when they impeded the polkers, or danced bodily over them when they disobeyed. Still it must be said, in justice to him, that dancing was not his sole and all-absorbing pursuit. Having an active turn of mind and body, he found leisure for many other profitable amusements. He was fond of that noble animal the horse, gambled habitually, ate and drank luxuriously,—in short, burned his candle at a good many ends: but the dance was, though not his sole, certainly his favourite passion; and he was never supreme-

ly nappy but when he had all the chairs in the house arranged in a circle, and all the boys and women of 'our set' going around them in the German cotillion, from noon to midnight at a (so-called) *matinée*, or from midnight to daybreak at a ball.

'And now,' said Benson, 'I think my cousin Gerard must be up by this time; he and Edwards are generally the last to come down to breakfast. Perhaps we shall find him at the ten-pin alley; I see the ladies are moving that way.'

To the ten-pin alley they went. Down stairs, men were playing, coat off, and cigar in mouth; while others waited their turn, with feet distributed in various directions. Above, all was decorum; the second story being appropriated to the ladies and their cavaliers. And very fond of the game the ladies were, for it afforded them an opportunity of showing off a handsome arm, and sometimes a neat ankle. Gerard was not there; they had to wait some time for alleys; although Benson was a little bored, and whispered to his friend that he meant to console himself by making a little sensation.

'By your play?' asked Ashburner.

'No, but by taking off my coat.'

'Why, really, considering the material of your coat, I think it might as well be on as off. Surely you can't find it an impediment?'

'No, but I mean to take it off for fun,—just to give the people here something to talk about; they talk so much about so little. They will be saying all over by to-morrow that Mr. Benson was in the ladies' room half undressed.'

After an hour's rolling they returned hotel-wards again, and as they did so, a very spicy phaeton, with an equally spicy unicorn, a dark chestnut leading two light

bays, drove up to the door. A tall, handsome man, handed out a rather pretty and very showily dressed little woman; and Ashburner recognized Gerard Ludlow.

It was not the first time he had seen Gerard. They had travelled over half Greece together, having accidentally fallen upon the same route. As the Honourable Edward had all the national fear of compromising himself, and Gerard was as proud and reserved as any Englishman, they went on for days together without speaking, although the only Anglo-Saxons of the party. At last, Ludlow having capsized, horse and all, on a particularly bad road, Ashburner took the liberty of helping to pick him up, and then they became very good friends. Gerard was at that time in the full flush of youth and beauty, and the lion of the Italian capital, which he had made his head quarters, where it was currently reported that a certain very desirable countess had made desperate love to him, and that a rich nobleman (for there are *some* rich noblemen still left on the continent) had tried very hard to get the handsome foreigner for a son-in-law. Knowing this, and some other similar stories about him, Ashburner was a little curious to see Mrs. Ludlow, and confessed himself somewhat disappointed in her: he found her rather pretty, and certainly not stupid; lively and agreeable in her manners, like most of her countrywomen; but by no means remarkably distinguished either for beauty or wit. Benson explained to him that his cousin 'had married for tin.'

'But Ludlow always talked of his father as a rich man, and his family as a small one. I should have supposed money about the last thing he would have married for.'

'Yes, he had prospects of the best; but he wanted ready money and a settled income. He was on a small

allowance; he knew the only way to get a handsome one was to marry, and that the more money his wife brought the more his father would come down with. So as Miss Hammersley had eight thousand a-year, old Ludlow trebled it; and Gerard may build as many phaetons as he likes. I don't mean to say that the match is an uncongenial one,—they have many tastes alike; but I do mean to say that love had nothing to do with it.'

'Well, I used to think that in your unsophisticated republican country, people married out of pure love; but now it looks as if the fashionables, at least, marry for money about as often as we do.'

'They don't marry for anything else,' replied Benson, using one of the slang phrases of the day.*

While the two friends were gossiping, Sumner and Le Roi had carried off the ladies; and an assemblage of juvenile beaux and young girls, and some few of the younger married women, had extemporized a dance in the largest of the public parlours, which they kept up till two o'clock and then vanished,—to dress, as it appeared for the three o'clock dinner. Benson's party had obtained their apartments at last,—a parlour and two bed-rooms for the ladies on the first floor, and chambers for the three men in the second story, of a recently built wing, popularly known as 'the Colony,' where most of the gay bachelors, and not a few of the young married men, slept. At dinner the ladies presented themselves as much dressed as they could be without being *décolletées;* and the men had doffed their grass-cloth or linen

* This is the strongest American (slang) way of putting an affirmation; and, probably, the strongest instance of it on record is that of the Bowery boy, who, when asked by the clergyman, 'Wilt thou have this woman?' replied, 'I won't have any one else.'

garments, and put on dress-coats, or, at least, black coats. Ashburner was a good-looking young man enough, and had sufficient vanity to take notice, in the course of the morning, that he was an object of attention; at dinner many looks were directed towards him, but with an expression of disappointment which he did not exactly understand at the time, but afterwards learned the reason of from his friend. Though making no pretensions to the title of exquisite, he happened to have a very neat shooting-jacket, unexceptionable in material and fit; and 'our set,' having approved of this, were curious to see what sort of costume he would display at dinner. When, therefore, he came to table,

Avec les mêmes bas et la même cravate,

and the shooting-jacket unchanged, they were visibly disappointed. Benson, to keep him in countenance, had retained his white coat, on the plea of its being most wanted then, as they were in the hottest part of the day, which excuse did not enable him to escape some hints from his sister-in-law, and a direct scolding from his wife.

Our Englishman thought the dinner hardly worth so much dressing for. The dishes, so far as he had an opportunity of judging, were tolerably cooked; but their number was not at all proportionate to that of the guests,—in short, it was a decided case of short commons, and the waiters were scarce to match. There were but two parties well attended to. One was the family of an old gentleman from the South, who was part owner of the building and who, besides this advantage, enjoyed the privilege of letting his daughter monopolize the piano of the public parlour half the day, to sing Italian *arias* shockingly out of tune, much to the disgust of the

boarders generally, and especially of the dancing set, who were continually wanting the instrument themselves for polking purposes. The other was——the reporters of *The Sewer;* who had a choice collection of dishes and waiters always at their command. To be sure they had their end of the table to themselves, too, for not a person sat within three chairs of them on either side; but this they, no doubt, accepted as a complimentary acknowledgment of their formidable reputation. Every one else was famished. The married women grumbled, and scolded their husbands,—those convenient scape-goats of all responsibility; the young ladies tried to look very sentimental, and above all such vulgar anxiety as that of meat and drink, but only succeeded in looking very cross; the men swore in various dialects at the waiters whenever they could catch them flying, and the waiters being used to it didn't mind it; and Ashburner, as a recollection of a former conversation flitted across his mind, could not help letting off a *tu quoque* at his friend.

'I say, Benson,' quoth he, 'is this one of the hotels that are so much better than ours, and that our people ought to take a lesson from?'

Harry looked half-a-dozen bowie-knives at him. Besides the natural irritation produced by hunger, his wife and sister-in-law had been whipping him over each other's shoulders for the last half-hour, and now this last remark made him ready to boil over. For a few seconds his face wore an expression positively dangerous, but in another moment the ridiculous side of the case struck him. With a good-humoured laugh he called for some wine—the only thing one was sure to get, as it was an extra, and a pretty expensive one too, on the bills—and they drowned their hunger in a bumper of tolerable champagne.

The fact was, that the Bath Hotel had been a most excellent house three or four summers previous, and the 'enterprising and gentlemanly' landlord (to borrow an American penny-a-liner's phrase) having made a fortune, as he deserved, had sold out his lease, with the good-will and fixtures of the establishment, to Mr. Grabster. The latter gentleman was originally a respectable farmer and market-gardener in the vicinity of Oldport; and having acquired by his business a fair sum of money, was looking about for some speculation in which to invest it. He commenced his new profession with tolerable good intentions, but having as much idea of keeping a hotel as he had of steering a frigate, and finding a balance against him at the end of the first season, from sheer mismanagement, he had been endeavouring ever since to make up for it by screwing his guests in every way. People naturally began to complain. Two courses were open to him, to improve his living, or to tip an editor to puff him. He deemed the latter course the cheaper, and bought *The Sewer*, which, while uttering the most fulsome adulation of everything connected with the Bath Hotel, frightened the discontented into silence through dread of its abuse. Ludlow, and some of the other exclusives, had, in the beginning of the present season, contrived a remedy which, for the time, was perfectly successful. They held a private interview with the cook, and made up a weekly contribution for him, on condition of their having the best of everything, and enough of it for dinner; and the waiters were similarly retained. For a time this worked to a marvel, and the subscribers were as well fed as they could desire. But the other guests began to make an outcry against the aristocracy and exclusiveness of private dishes on a public table, and the servants soon hit upon a compromise of their own, which was to take the money

without rendering the *quid pro quo*. This, of course, soon put an end to the payments, and things were on the old starvation footing again.

After dinner, everybody who had horses rode or drove. The roads about Oldport were heavy and sandy, and terrible work the dust made with the ladies' fine dresses and the gentlemen's fine coats.

'Rather different from the drives about Baden-Baden,' said Benson.

'Yes; but I suppose we must console ourselves on moral grounds, and remember, that there we owe the beautiful promenades to the gambling-table, while here we are without the roads, and also without the play.'

'Ah, but isn't there play here? only all *sub rosâ*. Wait a while, and you'll find out.'

And Ashburner did find out before many nights, when the footsteps and oaths of the young gamblers returning at four in the morning to their rooms in the 'colony,' woke him out of his first sleep. After the drive, tea—still at the *table d'hôte*—and after tea, dressing for the ball, which this night was at the Bellevue House, appropriately so-called from commanding a fine view of nothing. As the Bellevue was not a fashionable hotel (although the guests were sufficiently fed there), some of the exclusive ladies had hesitated about 'assisting' on the occasion; but the temptation of a dance was too strong to be resisted, and they all ultimately went. Le Roi accompanied the Bensons in the all-accommodating Rockaway. The Bellevue had a 'colony,' too, in the second story of which was the ball-room. As they ascended the stairs, the lively notes of *La Polka Sempiternelle, composée par Josef Bungel, et dédiée à M. T. Edwards*, reached their ears; and hardly were they over the threshold when Edwards himself hopped up

before them, and without other preface or salutation than a familiar nod, threw his arm round Mrs. Benson's waist, and swung her off in the dance; while Sumner, who had simultaneously presented himself to Miss Vanderlyn, took similar possession of her.

'Do you dance?'

'No, I thank you.'

While Benson asked the question, Le Roi dived at a girl and whirled her away: almost before Ashburner had answered it, his friend shot away from him, making point at a young married lady in the distance; and his bow of recognition ended in the back-step of the polka, as the two went off together at a killing pace. In five seconds from the time of entrance, Ashburner was left standing alone at one end of the room, and his companions were twirling at the other. For so habituated were the dancers to their fascinating exercise, that they were always ready to go at the word, like trained horses. And certainly the dancing was beautiful. He had never seen gentlemen move so gracefully and dexterously in a crowded room as these young Americans did. Le Roi and Löwenberg, who, by virtue of their respective nationalities, were bound to be good dancers, looked positively awkward alongside of the natives. As to the ladies, they glided, and swam, and realized all the so-often-talked of-and-seldom-seen 'poetry of motion.' Indeed, Ashburner thought they did it too well. He thought of Catiline's friend commemorated by Sallust, who 'danced better than became a modest woman.' He thought some of their displays were a little operatic, and that he had seen something like them at certain balls in Paris—*not* the balls of the Faubourg St. Germain. He thought that the historian's aphorism might be extended to the male part of the company,—and that they danced

better than became intelligent men. He thought—but as he prudently kept thoughts to himself, as some of his foreign prejudices may have been at the bottom of them, we will not stop to record them all. By-and-bye there was a quadrille for the benefit of the million, during which the exclusives rested, and Ashburner had full opportunity of observing them. The first thing that struck him was the extreme youth of the whole set, and more especially the masculine portion of it. Old men there were none. The old women, that is to say, the mammas and aunts, were stuck into corners out of the way, and no one took any notice of them. Hamilton Bell was quite an old beau by comparison—almost superannuated. Sumner would have been nearly off the book but for his very superior dancing. Even Benson seemed a middle-aged man compared with the majority of 'our set,' who averaged between boys of seventeen and young men of twenty-four. And the more juvenile the youth, the larger and stiffer was his white tie. Some of those neck-fastenings were terrific to behold, standing out a foot on each side of the wearer. All the Joinville's that Ashburner had ever seen, on all the gents in London or elsewhere, faded into insignificance before these portentous cravats. He could not help making some observation on this fashion to Benson, as he encountered him promenading with a fair *polkiste*.

'Did you ever notice the whiffle-trees of my team-trotting-wagon, how they extend on each side beyond the hubs of the wheels? They serve for feelers in a tight place; wherever you clear your whiffle-trees, you can clear your wheels; and these cravats are built on the same principle—wherever you clear your tie, you can clear your partner.'

'By one in the morning the democracy of the ball-

room had had enough of four hours' dancing and looking on. 'Our set' was left in full possession of the floor. Forthwith they seized upon all the chairs, the interminable German cotillion commenced. It lasted two hours —and how much longer Ashburner could not tell. When he went away at three, the dancers looked very deliquescent, but gave no symptoms of flagging. And so ended his first day's experience of an American watering-place.

CHAPTER VI.

LIFE AT A WATERING-PLACE.—THE LIONNE.

ONE day at Oldport Springs went off pretty much like another. There was the same continual whirl, and flurry, and toiling after pleasure—never an hour of repose—scarcely enough cessation for the two or three indispensable meals. When they had walked, and flirted, and played ten-pins, and driven, and danced all day, and all night till two in the morning, the women retired to their rooms, and the men retired to the gambling-house (which being an illegal establishment had, on that account, a greater charm in their eyes), and kept it up there till broad daylight; notwithstanding which, they always contrived to appear at breakfast a few hours after as fresh as ever, and ready to begin the same round of dissipation. Indeed, it was said that Tom Edwards and his most ardent followers among the boys never went to bed at all, but on their return from 'fighting the tiger,' bathed, changed their linen, and came down to the breakfast-room, taking the night's sleep for granted. It was a perpetual scene of excitement, relieved only by the heavy and calm figure of Sumner, who, silent and unimpassioned, largely capacious of meat and drink, a recipient of every diversion, without being excited by any, went through all the bowling, and riding, and polking, and gambling, with the gravity of a *commis* performing the

national French dance at the Mabille. There was much rivalry in equipages, especially between Ludlow, Benson, and Löwenberg, who drove the three four-in-hands of the place, and emulated one another in horses, harness, and vehicles—even setting up attempts at liveries, in which they found some imitators (for you can't do anything in America, however unpopular, without being imitated); and every horse, wagon, man-servant, and livery, belonging to every one, was duly chronicled in the Oldport correspondence of the *Sewer* and the *Jacobin*, which journals were wont one day to Billingsgate the 'mushroom aristocracy of wealth,' and the next to play Jenkins for their glorification. Le Roi, who owned no horses, and had given up dancing as soon as he found that there were many of the natives who could out-dance him, and that the late hours were bad for his complexion, attached himself to any or every married lady who was at all distinguished for beauty or fortune; and then went about asking, with an ostentatious air of mystery—'*Est-ce qu'on parle beaucoup de moi et Madame Chose?*' Sometimes he deigned to turn aside for an heiress; and as he was a very amusing and rather ornamental man, the girls were always glad to have his company; but the good speculations took care not to fall in love with him, or to give him sufficient encouragement (although a Frenchman does not require a great deal) to justify a declaration on his part. Perhaps the legend about the mutual-benefit-subscription club hurt his prospects, or it may have been his limited success in dancing. The same reason—as much, at least, as the assumed one of their vulgarity—kept Mr. Simpson, and other 'birds' of his set, out of the exclusive society. For dancing was the one great article in the code of the fashionables to which all other amusements or occupations were subordinate.

There was a grand dress-ball once a-week at one or other of the hotels, and two undress-balls—*hops* they were called; but most of the exclusives went to these also in full dress, and both balls and hops usually lasted till three or four in the morning. Then on the off-nights 'our set' got up their own little extempore balls in the large public parlor, to the music of some volunteer pianist, and when the weather was bad they danced in the same place all day; when it was good these informal *mantinées* did not generally last more than two or three hours. Then there were serenades given about day-break, by young men who were tired of 'the tiger'—nominally to some particular ladies, but virtually, of course, to the whole hotel, or nearly so—and the only music they could devise for these occasions were waltzes or polkas. Ashburner made a calculation that counting in the serenades the inhabitants of Oldport were edified by waltz, polka, and redowa music (in those days the *Schottisch* was not), eleven hours out of the twenty-four daily. And at last, when M. Monson, the Cellarius of New-York, came down with various dancing-girls, native and imported, to give lessons to such aspiring young men as might desire it, first Mrs. Harrison and other women, who, though wealthy and well known, were not exactly 'of us,' used to drop in to look at the fun; and, finally, all the exclusives, irresistibly attracted by the sound of fiddles and revolving feet, thronged the little room up stairs, where the dancing class was assembled, and from looking on, proceeded to join in the exercises. Ladies, beaux, and dancing-girls, were all mingled together, whirling and capering about in an apartment fifteen feet square, which hardly gave them room to pass one another. Benson was the only person who entered his protest against the proceeding. He declared that it

was a shame that his countrywomen should degrade themselves so before foreigners; but his expostulations were only laughed at: nor could he even persuade his wife and sister-in-law to quit the place, though he stalked off himself in high dudgeon, and wrote a letter to the *Episcopal Banner*, inveighing against the shameless dissipation of the watering-places. For Harry was on very good terms with the religious people in New-York, and was professedly a religious man, and had some sort of idea that he mixed with the fashionables to do them good; which was much like what we sometimes hear of a parson who follows the hounds to keep the sportsmen from swearing, and about as successful. Trying with all his might to serve God, and to live with the exclusives, he was in a fair way to get a terrible fall between two stools.

Talking of religion brings us naturally to Sunday, which at Oldport was really required as a day of rest. But whether it would have been so or not is doubtful, only that the Puritan habits of the country made dancing on that day impossible. It was a violation of public opinion, and of the actual law of the land, which no one cared to attempt. The fashionables were thus left almost without resource. The young men went off to dine somewhere in the vicinity, not unfrequently taking with them some of M. Monson's dancing girls; the married men, and the women generally, were in a sad state of listlessness. Some of them literally went to bed and slept for the rest of the week; others, in very despair of something to do, went to church and fell asleep there. Ashburner took advantage of the lull to fill up his journal, and put down his observations on the society about him, in which he had remarked some striking peculiarities, apart from the dancing mania and other outward and open characteristics.

The first thing that surprised him was the great number of misunderstandings and quarrels existing among the not very large number of people who composed the fashionable set. They seemed to quarrel with their relatives in preference, as a matter of course, and to admit strangers very readily to the privilege of relatives. The Robinsons were at feud with all their cousins; Benson with most of his except Ludlow. Ludlow, Bell, Sumner, every man he knew, had his set of private enemies, with whom he was not on speaking or bowing terms. Mrs. Harrison, who was very friendly to most of the men, scarcely spoke to a single woman in the place; but this was, perhaps, only carrying the war into Africa, as the ladies of 'our set' generally had intended not to recognize her as one of them. These numberless feuds made it very difficult to arrange an excursion, or get up a dinner at the *restaurant* of a 'colored gentleman' whose timely settlement in Oldport had enabled Mr. Grabster's guests to escape in some measure the pangs of hunger. On studying the causes of these disagreeable hostilities, he found that, among relatives, they were often caused by disputes upon money matters; that between persons not related they frequently sprung from the most trivial sources—frivolous points of etiquette, petty squabbles at cards, imaginary jealousies—but that in both cases the majority of them could be traced to the all-prevailing spirit of scandal. His purely intellectual education, if it had not made him something of a misogonist, had at least prevented him from gaining any accurate knowledge or appreciation of women: he set them down *en masse* as addicted to gossip, and was not surprised to find in the American ladies what he assumed as a characteristic of the whole sex. But he *was* surprised to find the same quality so prevalent among the men.

Not that they were in the habit of killing reputations, to give themselves *bonnes fortunes*, as Frenchmen might have done under similar circumstances; their defamatory gossip was more about men than about women, and seemed to arise partly from a general disbelief in virtue, and partly from inability to maintain an interesting conversation on other than personal topics. And though much of this evil speaking was evidently prompted by personal enmities, much also of it seemed to originate in no hostile feeling at all; and it was this that particularly astonished Ashburner, to find men speaking disparagingly of their friends—those who were so in the real sense of that much-abused term. Thus there could be no reasonable doubt that the cousins, Benson and Ludlow, were much attached to each other, and fond of each other's society; that either would have been ready to take up the other's quarrel, or endorse his notes, had circumstances required it. Yet Harry could never refrain from laughing before third parties at Gerard's ignorance of books, and making him the hero of all the Mrs. Malaprop-isms he could pick up or invent; or, as we have seen, speaking very disrespectfully of the motives which had led him to commit matrimony; and Gerard was not slow to make corresponding comments on various foibles of Harry. But the spirit of detraction was most fully developed in men who were not professionally idle, but had, or professed to have, some little business on hand. Of this class was Arthur Sedley, an old acquaintance and groomsman of Benson, and a barrister—(they are beginning to talk about barristers now in New-York, though it is a division of labour not generally recognised in the country)—of some small practice. Really well-educated, well-read, and naturally clever, his cleverness and knowledge were vastly more disagreeable than almost

any amount of ignorance or stupidity could have been. When he cut up right and left every man or woman who came on the *tapis*, his sarcasms were so neatly pointed that it was impossible to help laughing with him; but it was equally impossible to escape feeling that, as soon as your back was turned, he would be laughing at you. Riches and rich people were the commonest subject of his sneers, yet he lost no opportunity of toadying a profitable connexion, and was always supposed to be on the look-out for some heiress.

The next thing which made Ashburner marvel was the extreme youth of the fashionable set, particularly the male portion of it: or to speak more critically, the way in which the younger members of the set had suppressed their elders, and constituted themselves *the* society. A middle-aged man, particularly if, like Löwenberg, he happened to be rich, might be admitted to terms of equality, but the papas and mammas were absolutely set aside, and became mere formulas and appendages. The old people were nowhere; no one looked after their comfort in a crowd, or consulted them about any arrangement till after the arrangement was made. They had no influence and no authority. When Miss Friskin rode a wild colt bareheaded through the streets of Oldport, or danced the redowa with little Robinson in so very *château-rouge* a style, that even Mrs. Harrison turned away, poor Mrs. Friskin could interpose no impediment to the young lady's amusement; and even her father, the respected senior of the wealthy firm, Friskin and Co., who must have heard from afar of his daughter's vagaries (for all these things were written in the note-book of the *Sewer*), seemed never to have dreamed of the propriety or possibility of coming up to Oldport to put a stop to them. When Tom Edwards was squandering his fortune night

after night at the faro-table, and his health day after day in ceaseless dissipation, there was no old friend of his family who dared to give him advice or warning, for there was none to whose advice or warning he would have listened. Once when Ashburner was conversing with Benson on some subject which brought on a reference to this inverse order of things, the latter gave his explanation of it, which was to this effect:—

'The number of foreigners among us, either travelling for pleasure or settled for purposes of business, is so great, that they become an appreciable element in our society. It is, therefore, requisite that a fashionable should be able to associate easily with foreigners; and for this it is necessary that he or she should have some knowledge of foreign customs and languages, and, in the first place, of the French language. Now, if we go back a generation, we shall find that the men of that day were not educated to speak French. Go into the Senate Chamber at Washington, for instance, and you will not meet with many of the honourable senators who can converse in the recognized language of courts. Many of our most distinguished statesmen and *diplomats* can speak no tongue but their own. And to descend to private life, with which we have more particularly to do, when a foreigner presents himself with his letters at the dwelling of an old city merchant or professional man, it is generally the younger branches of the family who are called on to amuse him and play interpreters for the rest. This gives the young people a very decided advantage over their elders, and it is not surprising that they have become a little vain of it. And similarly with regard to foreign dresses, dances, cookery, and habits generally. The young men, having been the latest abroad, are the freshest and best informed in these things. It does not

require any great experience or wisdom to master them, only some personal grace and aptitude for imitation to start with, and an *aplomb* to which ignorance is more conducive than knowledge. Hence the standard of excellence has become one of superficial accomplishment, and the man of matured mind who enters into competition with these handsome, showy, and illiterate boys, puts himself at a discount. Look at Löwenberg. All his literary acquirements and artistic tastes (and he really has a great deal of both) go for nothing. The little beaux can speak nearly as many languages as he can, and dance and dress better. The only thing they can appreciate about him is his money, and the horses and dinners consequent thereon. If little Robinson, there, with his *ne plus ultra* tie and varnished shoes, were to have the same fortune left him to-morrow, he would be the better man of the two, because he can polk better, and because, being neither a married man nor the agent of a respectable house, he can gamble and do other things which Löwenberg's position does not allow him to do.'

This was a great confession for Benson to make against the country; nevertheless, it was not perfectly satisfactory to Ashburner, who thought that it did not explain all the phenomena of the case. It seemed to him that there was at work a radical spirit of insubordination, and a principle of overturning the formerly recognized order of domestic rule. The little children ate and drank what they liked, went to bed when they liked, and altogether were very independent of their natural rulers. Benson's boy rode rough-shod over his nurse, bullied his mother, and only deigned to mind his father occasionally. The wives ruled their husbands despotically, and acted as if they had taken out a patent for avenging the inferiority of their sex in other parts of the world.

Benson did not like dancing: he only danced at all because he thought it his business to know a little of everything, and because society thought it the duty of every young man who was not lame to understand the polka. But his wife kept him going at every ball for six hours, during five of which he was bored to death. Ludlow, whose luxurious living made violent exercise necessary for his health, and who, therefore, delighted in fencing, boxing, and 'constitutionals' that would have tired a Cantab, was made to drive about Mrs. Ludlow all day, till he hated the sight of his own horses. As to Mrs. Harrison, she treated her husband, when he made his appearance at Oldport (which was not very often) as unceremoniously as one would an old trunk, or any other piece of baggage which is never alluded to or taken notice of except when wanted for immediate use.

Ashburner first met this lady a very few days after his arrival at Oldport; indeed, she was so conspicuous a figure in the place, that one could not be there long without taking notice of her. About mid-day there was usually a brief interval between the ten-pin bowling and the informal dance; and during one of these pauses he perceived on the smoking-piazza, where ladies seldom ventured, a well-dressed and rather handsome woman smoking a cigarette, and surrounded by a group of beaux of all sizes, from men like Bell and Sumner to the little huge-cravated boys in their teens. She numbered in her train at least half-a-dozen of these cavaliers, and was playing them off against one another, and managing them all at once, as a circus-rider does his four horses, or a juggler his four balls. In a country where beauty is the rule rather than the exception, she was not a remarkable beauty—at least she did not appear such to Ashburner from that distance; nor was her dress, though sufficiently

elegant and becoming, quite so artistically put on as that of Mrs. Benson, and the other belles of the set; still there was clearly something very attractive and striking about her, and he was immediately induced to inquire her name, and, on learning that she was a real lady (though not of 'our set' of ladies), to request an introduction to her. But Benson, to whom he first applied, instead of jumping at the opportunity with his usual readiness to execute or anticipate his friend's wishes, boggled exceedingly, and put off the introduction under frivolous and evidently feigned pretences. It was so uncommon for Benson to show any diffidence in such matters, and his whole air said so plainly, 'I will do this out of friendship if you wish it, but for my own part I would rather not,' that Ashburner saw there was something in the wind, and let the subject drop. Ludlow, to whom he next had recourse, told him, with the utmost politeness, but in very decided terms, that 'his family' (he was careful not to insist on his own personality in the affair) 'had not the honour of Mrs. Harrison's acquaintance.' The next man who happened to come along was Mr. Simpson, and to him Ashburner made application, thinking that, perhaps, the fair smoker might more properly belong to the 'second set,' though so surrounded by the beaux of the first. But even Simpson, though the last man in the world to be guilty of any superfluous delicacy, hesitated very much, and made some allusion to Mrs. Simpson; and then Ashburner began to comprehend the real state of the case,—that most of the married women had declared war against Mrs. Harrison, that she had retaliated upon them all, and that the husbands were drawn into their wives' quarrels, and obliged to fight shy of her before strangers. It was clear, then, that he must apply to a bachelor; and accordingly he waylaid Sumner,

who 'was too happy' to introduce him at once in due form.

As Ashburner came up to Mrs. Harrison she began to play off her eyes at him, and he then perceived that they constituted her chief beauty. They were of that deep blue, which, in certain lights, passes for black,—large, expressive, and piercing,—the sort of eyes that go right through a man and look him down to nothing. Indeed, they had such an effect on him that he lost all distinctive idea of her other features. Her manner, too, had something very attractive, though he could not have defined wherein it consisted. She did not exhibit the *empressement* with which most of her countrywomen seek to put a stranger at his ease at once; or the *exigence* of a spoiled lady waiting to be amused; or the haughtiness of a great lady who does not care if she is amused herself and deigns no effort to amuse others. Neither did she attack him with raillery and irony, as Mrs. Benson had done on their first meeting. But she behaved as if she were used to seeing men like Ashburner every day of her life, and was willing to meet them half way and be agreeable to them, if they were so to her, without taking any particular trouble, for there was no appearance of effort to please, or even of any strong desire to please, in her words and gestures; yet she *did* please and attract very decidedly.

'So I saw you in Mrs. Harrison's train?' said Benson, when they next met.

'Yes, and I fancy I know why you hesitated to introduce me.'

As Ashburner spoke he glanced towards the parlour, where 'our set'—Mrs. Benson, of course, conspicuous among them—were engaged in their ordinary occupation of dancing.

'Oh, I assure you, *madame* is not disposed to be jealous, nor am I a man to take part in women's quarrels. I don't like the lady myself, to begin with; and were I a bachelor, should have as little to say to her as I have now. In the first place she is too old——'

'Too old! she cannot be thirty.'

'Of course a lady never *is* thirty, until she is fifty, at least; but at any rate I may say, without sacrilege, that Mrs. H. is pretty high up in the twenties. Now at that age a woman ought—not to give up society, that would be an absurdity in the other extreme, but—to leave the romping dances and the young men to the girls, who want them more, and whom they become better. Then I don't like her face. You must have taken notice that all the upper part of it is fine and intellectual, and she has glorious eyes——'

'Yes,' said Ashburner.

'But all the lower part is heavy and over-sensuous. Now, not only does this, in my opinion, entirely disfigure a woman's looks, but it suggests unpleasant ideas of her character. A man may have that ponderous chin and voluptuous mouth, without their disturbing the harmony of an otherwise handsome face. I do not think a woman can; and as in the physical so in the moral. A man can stand a much greater amount of sensuousness in his composition than a woman. I do not mean to allude to the different standards of morality for the two sexes admitted by society; for I don't admit it, and think it very unjust; and I am proud to say that our people generally entertain more virtuous as well as more equitable views on this point than the Europeans. I mean literally, that a man having so many opportunities for leading an active life, and being able to reason himself into or out of a great many things

to or from which a woman's only guide is her feelings, may be very sensuous without its doing any positive harm to himself or others; but with a woman, who is compelled to lead a comparatively idle life, such an element predominating in her character is sure to bring her into mischief.'

'Do you mean to say, then, that——,' and Ashburner stopped short, but his look implied the remainder of his interrupted question.

'Do you ask me from a personal motive?'

Ashburner coloured, and was proceeding to disclaim any such motive with an air of injured innocence.

'No, I don't mean anything of the sort,' said Benson, who felt that he had gone rather too far, and might unintentionally have slandered his countrywoman. 'I believe the lady is as pure as—as my wife, or any one else. The number of her beaux, and the equality with which she treats them, prove conclusively to my mind that her flirting never runs into anything worse. I don't think a woman runs any danger of that kind when she has such a lot of cavaliers; they keep watch on her, and on one another. I remember when my brother lived in town, he once was away from home for two or three weeks, and when he came back an old maid who lived in his street, and used to keep religious watch over the goings-out and comings-in of every one in the vicinity, said to him, 'How very gay your wife is, Mr. Benson! she has been walking with a different gentleman every day since you were gone.' 'Dear me!' says Carl; 'a different man every day! How glad I am! If you had told me she was walking with the *same* man every day I might have been a little scared.' But a woman may be perfectly chaste herself, and yet cause a great deal of unchasteness in other people. Here is this Mrs.

Harrison, smoking cigarettes—and cigars, too, sometimes, in the open air—drinking grog at night, and sometimes in the morning; letting Tom Edwards and the foolish boys who imitate him talk slang to her without putting them down; always ready for a walk or drive with the last handsome young man who has arrived; and utterly ignoring her husband, except when she makes some slighting mention of him for not sending her money enough;—what is the effect of all this upon the men? The foreigners—there are plenty of them here every season; I wonder there are so few this time: instead of one decent Frenchman like Le Roi, you usually find half-a-dozen disreputable ones; Englishmen many, not always of the best sort; Germans, Russians, and Spaniards, occasionally;—they all inclined to look upon her—especially considering her belligerent attitude towards the rest of the female population—as something *très légère*, and to attempt to go a little too far with her. Then she puts them down fast enough, and they in spite say things about her, the discredit of which extends to our ladies generally—in short, she exposes the country before foreigners. Then for the natives, she catches some poor boy just loose upon the world, dances with, flatters him—for she has a knack of flattering people without seeming to do so, especially by always appearing to take an interest in what is said to her,—keeps him dangling about her for a while; then some day he says or does something to make a fool of himself, and she extinguishes him. The man gets a check of this sort at his entry into society that is enough to make him a misogynist for life. And the little scenes that she used to get up last summer with married men, just to make their wives jealous!'

'Which, I suppose, is the reason none of your wives

will let you speak to her?' said Ashburner, who began to feel, he hardly knew why, a sentiment of partisanship for Mrs. Harrison. 'But granting that her face, as you describe it, is an index of her character, I should draw from that exactly the opposite inference. I believe that the women who make mischief in the way you mention are your unsensuous and passionless ones—that the perfect flirt, single or married, must be a perfectly cold woman, because it is only one of such a temperament who can thus trifle with others without danger to herself. I speak hesitatingly, for all women are a mystery, and my experience is as yet very limited; but such opportunities of observation as have fallen to my lot confirm me in the theory.'

Somewhat to Ashburner's surprise, his friend made no attempt to controvert his argument. He only turned it aside, saying,—

'Well, I don't like her at any rate. If I had no other reason, the way she talks of her husband would be enough to make me.'

'Oh there *is* a Mr. Harrison then? One hears so little of him——'

'And sees so nothing of him, you may say.'

'Exactly—that I took him for a mythological personage—a cousin of our Mrs. Harris.'

'Nevertheless I assure you Mr. Harrison exists very decidedly—a Wall Street speculator, and well known as such by business people; a capital man behind a trotter, an excellent judge of wine. Probably he will come here from the city once or twice before we leave, and I shall find an opportunity to introduce you to him, for he is really worth knowing, and considerable of a man, as we say—no fool at all, except in the way he lets his wife bully him.'

'If he made an unsuitable match that does not show his wisdom conspicuously.'

'It was an unsuitable match, enough, Heaven knows. But when he proposed, he was in the state of mind in which sensible people do the most foolish things. He was a great man in stocks—controlled the market at one time—had been buying largely just before the election of '44, when we all expected Henry Clay would get in with plenty to spare. When Polk was elected, great was the terror of all respectable citizens. My brother caught such a fright then, that I don't think he has fairly recovered from it to this day. How the stocks did tumble down! Harrison had about nine millions on his hands; he couldn't keep such a fund, and was forced to sell it at any price, and lost just one-third. Just as he was beginning to pick himself up after the shock, and wonder, like the sailor whom the conjurer blew up, what was to come next, Mr. Whitey, of the *Jacobin*, now the Honourable Pompey Whitey—and one doesn't see why he shouldn't be, for after all an editor is not, generally speaking, a greater blackguard than most of our Congress men—Whitey, I say, who for our sins is nominally attached to the Conservative party, conceived the bright idea of overbidding the enemy for popular favor, and proposed—no, he didn't actually propose in so many words, but only strongly hinted at the desirableness of the measure—that there should be no more paying rent, and a general division of property. I am not sure but there was some additional suggestions on the expediency of abolishing the Christian religion and the institution of matrimony, but that has nothing to do with politics This last drop in the bucket quite overflowed poor Harrison; so, as if he had said to himself, 'Let us eat and drink and get married, for to-morrow we shall have a

proscription and *nova tabulæ*,' he rushed off and proposed to Miss Lewis.'

'Then, if she accepted him after he lost his fortune, it shows she did not marry for money, at any rate.'

'There you have missed it. He lost the whole of *a* fortune, but not the whole of *his*. He must have a million of dollars left, and a man with that is not poor in any country—certainly it was a great catch for Miss Lewis without a red cent of her own. She jilted a Frenchman for him: the unfortunate, or fortunate cast-off had ordered much jewellery and other wedding presents, and when left in the lurch he quietly proposed that, as he had no longer any use for the articles, Harrison, who had, should take them off his hands; and this offer was accepted. Very French in him to make it—don't you think so?—and rather American in the other to take it. Well, I hope Harrison will come this way soon; I should really like you to know him.'

One or two days after this conversation Ashburner met his friend walking up and down the interminable piazza of the Bath hotel, arm-in-arm with a middle-aged man, who presented as great a contrast to Benson's usual associates, and to Benson himself, as could well be imagined. The new-comer was short in stature and square-built, rather ugly, and anything but graceful; he wore very good clothes, but they were badly put on, and looked as if they had never undergone the brush since leaving the tailor's hands; he wore no gloves, and, in short, had altogether an unfashionable appearance. But though indubitably an unfashionable man, he did not give you the impression of a vulgar one; there was nothing snobbish or pretentious in his ugliness, and his cavernous black eye could have belonged only to an intelligent and able man. Benson was joking or pressing him upon some matter which he seemed unwilling to explain.

'But do tell me,' said Harry, as they passed Ashburner, 'what *have* you been doing to yourself? Sprained your finger by working too hard the night before last packet day? or tumbled down from running too fast in Wall Street, and not thinking which way you were going?' And he took in his own delicate white hand the rough paw of the stranger, which was partly bound up as if suffering from some recent injury.

'If you must know,' said the other, stopping short in his walk, 'I broke my knuckles on an Irishman's teeth. Last week the fellow drove me from the North River boat to my house in Union Square, and I offered him seventy-five cents. He was very insolent, and demanded a dollar. If I had had a dollar-note about me I might have given it him, but it happened that I had only the six shillings in change; and so, knowing that was two shillings more than his legal fare, I became as positive as he. At last he seized my trunk, and then I could not resist the temptation of giving him a left-hander that sent him clean down the steps into the gutter.'

'And then?'

'He made a great bawling, and was beginning to draw a crowd about the house, when I walked off to the nearest police-station; and as it turned out that my gentleman was known as a troublesome character, they threatened to take away his license and have him sent to Blackwell's Island if he didn't keep quiet: so he was too glad to make himself scarce.'

'By Jove, you deserve a testimonial from the city! I once got twenty dollars damages from an omnibus-driver for running into my brougham, knocking off a wheel, and dumping my wife and child into the street; and I thought that it was a great exploit; but this performance of yours throws me into the shade.'

Just then Benson caught sight of Ashburner, and excusing himself to the other, rushed up to him.

'Let me tell you now, before I forget it. We are going over to the glen to-morrow to dine, and in fact spend the day there. You'll come, of course?'

'With great pleasure,' said Ashburner; 'but pray don't let me take you away from your friend.'

'Oh, that's only Harrison.'

'W[illegible]eant, of course, our set, with such foreign lions as the p[illegible] afforded, foremost among whom stood Ashburner and Le Roi. Benson, Ludlow, and some of the other married men undertook to arrange it, always under the auspices of the Robinsons.

These Robinsons were evidently the leaders in every movement of the fashionables, but why they were so was not so clear—at least, to Ashburner, though he had abundant opportunities of studying the whole family. There was a father in some kind of business, who occupied the usual position of New-York fathers; that is to say, he made the money for the rest of the family to spend, and showed himself at Oldport once a fortnight or so—possibly to pay the bills. There was a mother, stout and good-humoured, rather vulgar, very fussy, and no end of a talker: she always reminded Ashburner of an ex-lady-mayoress. There were three or four young men, sons and cousins, with the usual amount of white tie and the ordinary dexterity in the polka; and two daughters, both well out of their teens. The knowing ones said that one of these young ladies was to have six thousand a-year by her grandfather's will, and the other little or nothing; but it was not generally understood which was the heiress, and the old lady manœuvred with them as if *both* were. This fact, however, was not sufficient to account for their rank as *belles*, since there were several

other girls in their circle quite as well, or better off. Nor had their wit or talent any share in giving them their position; on the contrary, people used to laugh at the *bêtises* of the Robinsons, and make them the butt of real or imaginary good stories. And, in point of birth, they were not related to the Van Hornes, the Bensons, the Vanderlyns, or any of the old Dutch settlers; nor, like Bell, Ludlow, and others of their set, sprung from the British families of long standing in the [illegible]. On the very morning of the proposed excursion, Sedley was sneering at them for *parvenus*, and trying to amuse Ashburner at their expense with some ridiculous stories about them.

'And yet,' said the Englishman, 'these people are your leaders of fashion. You can't do anything without them. They are the head of this excursion that we are just going upon. Benson tells me 'the Robinsons are to be there,' as if that settled the propriety and desirability of my being there also.'

'As to that,' replied Sedley, 'fashionable society is a vast absurdity anywhere, and it is only natural that absurd people should be at the head of it. The Robinsons want to be fashionable—it is their only ambition—they try hard for it; and it is generally the case that those who devote themselves to any pursuit have some success in it, and only right that it should be so. Then they are hopelessly good-natured folks, that you can't insult or quarrel with.' Sedley had so little of this quality himself that he looked on the possession of it as a weakness rather than a virtue. 'Then they are very fond of good living.'

'Yes, I remember hearing Benson say that he always liked to feed Mrs. Robinson at a ball,—it was a perfect pleasure to see her eat; and that when Löwenberg, in

the pride of his heart, gave a three days' *déjeûner*, or lunch, or whatever it was, after his marriage, she was seen there three times each day.'

'And he might have told you that they are as liberal of their own good things as fond of those of others. Old Robinson has some first-rate Madeira, better by a long chalk than that Vanderlyn Sercial that Harry Benson is always cramming down your throat—metaphorically, I mean, of course literally. The young men like to drop in there of an evening, for they are sure to find a good supper and plenty of materials ready for punch and polka. Then they always manage to catch the newest lions. When I first saw you in their carriage alongside of Miss Julia, I said to myself, 'That Englishman must be somebody, or the Robinsons would not have laid hold of him so soon.' But their two seasons in Paris were the making of them—and the unmaking, too, in another sense; for they ate such a hole in their fortune—or, rather, their French guests did for them—that it has never recovered its original dimensions to this day. They took a grand hôtel, and gave magnificent balls, and filled their rooms with the Parisian aristocracy. My uncle, who is an *habitué* of Paris, was at the Jockey Club one day, and heard two exquisites talking about them. '*Connaissez-vous ce Monsieur Robinson?*' asked one. '*Est-ce que je le connais!*' replied the other, shrugging his shoulders. '*Je mange ses dîners, je danse à ses bals; v'là tout.*' *Voilà tout*, indeed! That is just all our people get by keeping open house for foreigners.'

Just then Benson and Ludlow came up, the former under much excitement, and the latter in a sad state of profanity. As they both insisted on talking at once, it was some time before either was intelligible; at length Ashburner made out that the excursion had met with a

double check. In the first place, all the bachelors had demanded that Mrs. Harrison should be of the party, in which they were sustained by Löwenberg, who, though partly naturalized by his marriage, still considered himself sufficiently a stranger to be above all spirit of clique. All the other married men had objected, but the Harrisonites ultimately carried their point. Of the two principal opponents, Ludlow was fairly talked off his [illegible] by the voluble *patois* of Löwenberg, and Benson [illegible]pletely put down by the laconic and inflexible Sumner. So far so bad, but worse was to follow; for after the horses had been ordered, and most of the ladies, including the Robinsons, bonneted and shawled for the start, the *lionne*, who had, doubtless, heard of the unsuccessful attempt to blackball her, and wished to make a further trial of her power, suddenly professed a headache, whereupon her partisans almost unanimously declared that, as she couldn't go, they didn't want to go; and thus the whole affair had fallen through. Such was the substance of their melancholy intelligence, which they had hardly finished communicating when a *dea ex machina* appeared in the person of Mrs. Benson. She declared that it was 'a shame,' and 'too bad,' and she 'had never,' &c.; and brought her remarks to a practical conclusion by vowing that *she* would go, at any rate, whoever chose to stay with that woman; 'and if no one else goes with us I'm sure Mr. Ashburner will;' at which Ashburner was fain to express his readiness to follow her to the end of the world, if necessary. Then she followed up her advantage by sending a message to Sumner, which took him captive immediately; and as she was well seconded by the Robinsons, who on their part had brought over Le Roi, the party was soon reorganized pretty much on its original footing. When the cause of all the trouble found herself

likely to be left in a minority, her headache vanished immediately, in time for her to secure beaux enough to fill her barouche, and Mr. Harrison was put into a carriage with the musicians. Mrs. Benson's vehicle was equally well filled; and Harry, who, by his wife's orders, and much against his own will, had lent his wagon and ponies to a young Southerner that was doing the amiable to Miss Underlyn, had nothing left for it but to go on horseback; in which Ashburner undertook to join him, having heard that there was a good bit of turf on the road to the glen.

'If you go that way,' said Mrs. Robinson, when he announced his intention, 'you will have another companion. Mr. Edwards means to ride.'

Ashburner had seen Edwards driving a magnificent trotter about Oldport, but could not exactly fancy him outside of a horse, and conjectured that he would not make quite so good a figure as when leading the redowa down a long ball-room. But the hero of the dance was not forthcoming for some time, so they mounted, Benson his pet Charlie, and the Englishman the best horse the stables of Oldport could furnish, which it is hardly necessary to say was not too good a one, and were leaving the village leisurely to give the carriages a good start of them, when they heard close behind the patter of a light-stepping horse, and the next moment Tom Edwards ranged up alongside. The little man rode a bright bay mare, rising above fifteen hands, nearly full-blooded, but stepping steadily and evenly, without any of that fidget and constant change of gait which renders so many blood-horses anything but agreeable to ride, and carrying her head and tail to perfection. He wore white cord trousers, a buff waistcoat, and a very natty white hair-cloth cap. His coat was something between a summer sack

and a cutaway,—the colour, a rich green of some peculiar and indescribable shade. His spurs were very small, but highly polished; and, instead of a whip, he carried a little red cane with a carved ivory head. In his marvellously-fitting white buckskin glove he managed a rein of some mysterious substance that looked like a compound of india-rubber and sea-weed. He sat his mare beautifully—with a little too much aim at effect, perhaps; but gracefully and firmly at the same time. Ashburner glanced at his own poor beast and wished for Daredevil, whose antics he had frequently controlled with great success at Devilshoof; and Benson could not help looking a little mortified, for Charlie was not very well off for tail, and had recollections of his harness-days, which made him drop his head at times, and pull like a steam-engine; besides which, Harry—partly, perhaps, from motives of economy, partly, as he said, because he thought it snobbish to ride in handsome toggery—always mounted in the oldest clothes he had, and with a well-used bridle and saddle. But there was no help for it now, so off the three went together at a fair trot, and soon overtook most of the party, Edwards putting his spurs into the bay mare and showing off her points and his horsemanship at every successive vehicle they passed.

The piece of turf which Benson had promised his friend was not quite so smooth as Newmarket heath, but it was more than three quarters of a mile long, and sufficiently level to be a great improvement on the heavy and sandy road. So unaccustomed, however, are Americans to 'riding on grass,' that Edwards could not be persuaded to quit the main path until Benson had repeatedly challenged him to trot on the green. As soon as the two horses were fairly alongside they went off, without waiting the signal from their riders, at a pace which kept

Ashburner at a hand-gallop. For awhile they were neck-and-neck, Benson and Charlie hauling against each other, the rider with his weight thrown back in the stirrups and labouring to keep his 'fast crab' from breaking, while the mare struck out beautifully with a moderate pull on the rein. Then as Benson, who carried no whip, began to get his horse more in hand, he raised a series of yells in true jockey fashion to encourage his own animal and break up Edwards's. The mare skipped—Tom caught her in an instant, but she fell off in her stroke from being held up, and Charlie headed her a length; then he gave her her head, and she broke—once, twice, three times; and every time Benson drew in his horse, who was now well settled down to his work, and waited for Edwards to come on. At last, his mare and he both lost their tempers at once. She started for a run, and he dropped the reins on her neck and let her go. At the same instant Benson struck both spurs into Charlie, who was a rare combination of trotter and runner, and away went the two at full gallop. Ashburner's hack was left behind at once, but he could see them going on close together, tooling their horses capitally; Edwards's riding being the more graceful, and Benson the more workmanlike; the mare leading a trifle, as he thought, and Charlie pressing her close. Suddenly Edwards waved his cane as in triumph, but the next moment he and his mare disappeared, as if the earth had swallowed them up, while Benson's horse sheered off ten feet to the left.

CHAPTER VII.

LIFE AT A WATERING-PLACE—THE DOG OF ALCIBIADES.

WE left Tom Edwards mysteriously swallowed up, like a stage ghost down a trap-door. And do you know, reader, I am very near leaving him so for good and all, and suspending these sketches indefinitely—yea, even to the time of the Mississippi dividends, or any other period beyond the Greek Calends that your imagination can conjure up. For the wise men—and the wise women, too—of Gotham are wroth with me, and one says that I am writing on purpose to libel this man or puff that woman, and another charges me with sketching my own life in *Fraser* for self-glorification, and a third holds up the last number of *Pendennis* at me and says, 'If you could write like *that*, there would be some excuse for you, but you won't as long as you live.' 'Alas, no!' said I, and was just going to burn my unfinished papers, and vow that I would never again turn aside from my old craft of reviewing. But then came reflection in the shape of a bottle of true Dutch courage—genuine Knickerbocker Madeira—and said 'Why should you be responsible for resemblances you never meant, if people will insist on finding them? Consider how prone readers, and still more hearers who take their reading at second hand, are to suppose that the author, be he great or small, must have represented himself in some one of his personages.' True enough, Mr. Bottle; for instance,

any one of our fashionables will tell you that, 'our *spirituel* and accomplished friend' (as Slingsby calls him), M. Le Vicomte Vincent Le Roi, is the hero of his thrilling romance, *Le Chevalier Bazalion*—why they should, or what possible resemblance they can find between the real man in New-York, and the ideal one in the novel, it passeth my poor understanding to discover. Bazalion is a stalwart six-footer, who goes about knocking people's brains out, scaling inaccessible precipices, defending castles single-handed against a regiment or two, and, by way of relaxation after this hard work, victimizing all the fair dames and blooming damsels that come in his way—breaking the hearts of all the women when he has broken the heads of all the men. Le Roi is a nice gentlemanly man, of the ordinary size, who sings prettily and talks well, and makes himself generally agreeable, and not at all dangerous in society—much the more Christian and laudable occupation, it seems to me. If ever he does bore you, it is with his long stories, not with a long pike as Bazalian used to do. Be the absurdity, then, on the head of him who makes it; *Qui vult decipi decipiatur:* if any one chooses to think that I am bodied forth under the character of Harry Benson, and am, in consequence, a handsome young man, who can do a little of every thing instead of ——, but never mind what; your actor has not yet sufficient standing to come down before the footlights, and have his little bit of private chaff with the audience. Only this will I say, so help me N. P. Willis, I mean to go on with these sketches till they are finished, provided always that *Fraser* will take them so long, and that you continue to read them, or fall into a sweet and soothing slumber over them, as the case may be. For if we are all to shut up shop until we can write as well as Mr.

Titmarsh, there will be too extensive a bankruptcy of literary establishments.

Before Ashburner could form any conjecture to account for the evanishment of Edwards—indeed, before he could altogether realize it to himself—the little man's head re-appeared above the ground, though there were no signs of his horse; and at the same time Benson began to ride round the scene of the catastrophe, at an easy canter, laughing immoderately. The Englishman shook up his brute into the best gallop he could get out of him, and a few more strides brought him near enough to see the true state of things. There was a marsh at no great distance, which rendered the grass in the immediate vicinity moist and sloppy, and just in this particular spot the action of the water had caved away a hole precisely large enough to receive a horse and rider—it could hardly have made a more accurate grave had they been measured for it—and so masked by a slight elevation in front, that it was ten to one any person riding over the ground at such a rate, and unacquainted with the position of this trap, but must fall headlong into it, as Edwards had done. There was some reason to suspect that our friend Harry, who was an habitual rider, and knew the environs of Oldport pretty well, and was fonder of all short cuts and going over grass than most American horsemen are, had not been altogether ignorant of the existence of the pitfall; it looked very much as if he had led Edwards, who was no particular friend of his, purposely into it: but if such was the case, he kept his own counsel. When the fallen man and mare had scrambled out of the hole, which they did before Benson had offered to help them, or Ashburner had time to be of any assistance, it appeared that she had sprained her off fore-ankle, and he his nigh wrist. But they were close to the main road; by good

luck a boy was found to conduct the animal home, and by a still greater piece of good luck the Robinsons' carriage happened to be coming along just then, so the little man, who did not take up much room, was popped into it, and as much pitied and mourned over by the lady occupants as was *père Guilleri* in the French song. And, to do him justice, even without this consolation, he had taken his mishap very quietly from the first, as soon as he found himself not injured in any vital, *i. e.* dancing part.

Having finished their road at a more leisurely pace, our two horsemen arrived at the glen after most of the company were assembled there. And as the place was one of general resort, they noticed traces of other parties, people of the Simpson class, hail-fellow-well-met men, who didn't dance but took it out in drinking, and who, in their intercourse with the other sex, betrayed more vulgar familiarity and less refined indecency than characterized the men and boys of Bell, Edwards, Robinson, and Co.'s set. But of these it may be supposed that the set took no heed. There was some really pretty scenery about the glen, but they took no heed of that either—to be sure, most of them had seen it at least once before. They had gone straight to the largest parlour of the house, and led, as usual, by the indefatigable Edwards, had begun their tricks with the chairs. Booted and spurred as he was, and with his arm in a sling, the ever-ready youth had already arranged the German cotillion, taking the lead himself, and constituting Sumner his second in command. Benson was left out of this dance for coming too late, one of the ladies told him; but he did not find the punishment very severe, as he rather preferred walking with Ashburner, and showing him the adjacent woods. As they passed out through

several specimens of the Simpson species, who were smoking and lounging around the door, Ashburner nearly ran over a very pretty young woman who was coming up the steps. She was rather rustically, but not unbecomingly dressed, and altogether so fresh and rosy, that it was a treat to see her after the fine town ladies, even the youngest of whom were beginning to look faded and jaded from the dissipation of the season. But when she opened her mouth in reply to Benson's affable salutation, it was like the girl in the fairy tale dropping toads and adders, so nasal, harsh, and inharmonious was the tone in which she spoke.

'That's Mrs. Simpson,' said Harry, as they went on 'the Bird's wife. Pretty little woman: what a pity she has that vulgar accent! She belongs to New England originally: one finds many such girls here, every way charming until they begin to talk. But I suppose you saw no difference between her and any of us. In your ears we all speak with a barbarous accent—at least you feel bound to think so.'

'What do you think yourself? You have known a good many of my countrymen, and heard them talk, and are able to make the comparison. Do you, or do you not, find a difference?'

'To say the truth, I do; it is a thing I never think seriously of denying, for it seems to me neither singular nor to be ashamed of. You can tell an Irishman from a Londoner by his accent: so you can a Scotchman: or a Yorkshireman for that matter: why should you not be able to tell an American? The error of your countrymen consists in attributing to all our people the nasal twang, which is almost peculiar to one section of the country. If I were asked the peculiar characteristic of a New-Yorker's speech, I should say *monotone*. Notice

any one of our young men—you will find his conversational voice always pitched in the same key. Sumner goes on at the same uniform growl, Edwards in an unvaried buzz. When I first landed in England, I was struck with the much greater variety of tone one hears in ordinary conversation. Your women, especially, seemed to me always just going to sing. And I fancied the address of the men affected—just as, very likely, this monotone of ours seems affected to you.'

'What I remark most is a harshness and dryness of voice, as if the extremes of climate here had an injurious effect on the vocal organs.'

'Perhaps they do; and yet I think you will find a better average of singers, male and female, in our society than in yours, notwithstanding our fashionables are so engrossed by dancing. Holla! here's Harrison. How are you, old fellow? and how are the Texas Inconvertibles.'

It was indeed the broker, wandering moodily alone. What had he in common with the rest of the company—the fops and flirts, the dancing men and dancing women? The males all snubbed and despised him, from tall Bell, down to little Robinson; the women were hardly conscious of his existence. He knew, too, that he could thrash any man there in a fair stand-up fight, or buy out any three of them, ay, or talk any of them down in the society of sensible and learned people; and this very consciousness of superiority only served to embitter his position the more. There were other sets, doubtless, who would have welcomed him gladly, but either they were not sufficiently to his taste to attract him, or he was in no mood to receive consolation from their sympathy. So he wandered alone, untouched by the charming scenery about him—a man whom nobody

cared for; and when Benson addressed him genially, and in an exuberance of spirits threw his arm over the other's neck as they walked side by side, the broker's heart seemed to expand towards the man who had shown him this slight profession of kindness, his intelligent eyes lighted up, and he began to talk out cheerfully and unassumingly all that was in him.

Harrison's own narrative of his personal prowess, as well as the qualified panegyric pronounced upon him by Benson, had led Ashburner to expect to find in him a manly person, with some turn of athletic sports and good living, but no particular intellectual endowments beyond such as his business demanded. He was, therefore, not a little astonished at (inasmuch as he was altogether unprepared for) the variety of knowledge and the extent of mental cultivation which the broker displayed as their conversation went on. They talked of the hills and valleys, and ravines and water-courses around them, and Harrison compared this place with others in a way that showed a ready observer of the beauties of nature. They talked of Italy, and Harrison had at his fingers' ends the principal palaces in every city, and the best pictures in every palace. They talked of Greece, and Harrison quoted Plato. They talked of England and France, and Harrison displayed a familiar acquaintance, not merely with the statistics of the two countries, but also with the habits and characteristics of their people. Finally, they talked on the puzzling topic of American society—puzzling in its transition state and its singular contrasts—and, whether the broker's views were correct or not, they were anything but commonplace or conventional.

'Our fashionable society has been all a mistake hitherto,' said Harry (Ashburner could not well make

out whether there was a spice of irony in his observation); Mrs. Benson and some others are going to reform it indifferently. The women thus far have been lost sight of after marriage, and have left the field to the young girls. Now they are beginning to wake up to their rights and privileges.'

'They will not remedy any of the present evils in that way,' answered Harrison, apparently addressing himself to Ashburner, but he seemed to be talking at Benson, and through him at Benson's wife, or his own, or both of them. 'Our theory and practice was that a young girl should enjoy herself in all freedom; that her age and condition were those of pleasure and frolic—of dissipation, if you will—that after her marriage she, comparatively speaking, retired from the world, not through any conventional rule or imaginary standard of propriety, but of her own free will and the natural course of things; because the cares of maternity and her household gave her sufficient employment at home. A woman who takes a proper interest in her family gives them the first place in her thoughts, and is always ready to talk about them. Now these domestic details are the greatest possible bore to a mere fashionable casual drawing-room acquaintance. Hence you see that the French, whose chief aim is to talk well in a drawing-room or an opera box, utterly detest and unmercifully ridicule everything connected with domesticity or home life. On the other hand, if a married woman never talks about these things or lets you think of them, she does not take a proper interest in her family. No, the fault of youth is with the other sex. There are too few men about, and too many boys. And the more married belles there are the more will the boys be encouraged. For your married belles like to have men about them younger than them-

selves—it makes them appear younger, or at least they think so; and besides, such youths are more easily managed and more subservient. But, still worse, the more these boys usurp the place of men in society, the more boyish and retrograde will the few men become who continue to divide the honours of society with them. When Plato enumerated among the signs of a republic in the last stage of decadence, that the youth imitate and rival old men, and the old men let themselves down to a level with the youth, he anticipated exactly the state of things that has come to pass among us. Look at that little friend of yours with the beard—I don't mean Edwards, but an older man about his size.'

'Dicky Bleecker, I suppose you mean,' growled Benson: 'he's as much your friend—or your wife's—as he is mine.'

'Well, he is my contemporary, I may say; perhaps five years at most my junior. What perceptible sign of mature age or manliness is there about him? In what is he superior to or distinguishable from young Snelling, who but this season rejoices in his first white tie and first horse, and the fruits of his first course of dancing lessons?'

'Well, but consider,' says Benson, who was always ready to take up any side of an argument—it is one of the first criticisms Ashburner made on American conversation, that the men seemed to talk for victory rather than for truth—'it stands to reason, that an intelligent married woman must be better able than a girl to converse with a mature man, and her conversation must have more attraction for him. As to our boys coming out too soon, doubtless they do, but that depends not on the persons ready to receive them, but on the general social system of the country which pushes them into

the world so early. For instance, I was left my own master at twenty-one. So, too, with the want of proper progress and growth in knowledge of the men. It is and must be so with the man of fashion everywhere, for he is not occupied in learning things that have a tendency to develope or improve his mind, but the contrary. I myself have seen Frenchmen of fifty as easily amused and as eager after trifles as boys.'

'Frenchmen!' sneered the other; 'yes, but they *are* boys all their lives, except in innocence.'

'Very amusing and pleasant, at any rate; the best people for travelling acquaintances that I know.'

'Exactly—very pleasant to know for a little while. I have met with a great many Frenchmen who impressed me favourably, and I used to think as you say, what amusing people they were, but I never had occasion to live with one for any length of time without finding him a bore and a nuisance. A Frenchman turns himself inside out, as it were, at once. He shows off all that there is to show on first acquaintance. You see the best of him immediately, and afterwards there is nothing left but repetitions of the same things, and eternal dissertations on himself and his own affairs. He is like a wide shallow house, with a splendid front externally, and scanty furniture inside.'

'Very true, and an Englishman (don't blush, Ashburner) is like a suit of college-rooms in one of his own university towns—a rusty exterior, a dark narrow passage along which you find your way with difficulty; and when you do get in, jolly and comfortable apartments open suddenly upon you; and as you come to examine them more carefully, you discover all sorts of snug, little, out-of-the way closets and recesses, full of old books and old wine, and all things rich and curious. But

the entrance is uninviting to a casual acquaintance. Now, when you find an American of the right stamp' (here Benson's hands were accidentally employed in adjusting his cravat), 'he hits the proper medium, and is accessible as a Frenchman and as true as an Englishman.'

Ashburner was going to express a doubt as to the compatibility of the two qualities, when Harrison struck in again.

'On that account I never could see why Frenchmen should be dreaded as dangerous in society. They fling out all their graces at once, exhaust all their powers of fascination, and soon begin to be tiresome. How many cases I have seen where a Frenchman fancied he was making glorious headway in a lady's affections, and that she was just ready to fall into his arms, when she was only ready to fall asleep in his face, and was civil to him only from a great sacrifice of inclination to politeness.'

'Very pleasant it must be to a lady,' said Ashburner, 'that a man should be at the same time wearying her to death with his company, and perilling her reputation out of doors by his language.'

'By Jove, it's dinner time!' exclaimed Benson, pulling out a microscopic Geneva watch. 'I thought the clock of my inner man said as much.' And back they hurried through the woods to the Glen House, but were as late for the dinner as they had been for the dance. Harrison and Benson found seats at the lower end of the table, where they established themselves together, and began, *à propos* of Edwards's misadventure, to talk horse, either because they had exhausted all other subjects, or because they did not think the company worthy a better one. Mrs. Benson beckoned Ashburner up to a place by her, but, somehow, he found himself opposite

Mrs. Harrison's eyes, and though he could not remember anything she said ten minutes after, her conversation, or looks, or both, had the effect of transferring to her all the interest he was beginning to feel for her husband—of whom, by the way, she took no more notice than if he did not belong to her.

'Poor Harrison!' said Benson, as he and Ashburner were walking their horses leisurely homeward that evening (they both had too much sense to ride fast after dinner), 'he is twice thrown away! He might have been a literary gentleman and a lover of art, living quietly on a respectable fortune; but his father would make him go into business. He might be a model family man, and at the same time a very entertaining member of society; but his wife has snubbed and suppressed him for her own exaltation. If, instead of treating him thus, she would only show him a little gratitude as the source of all her luxury and magnificence, her dresses and jewellery, her carriage and horses (what a pair of iron-greys she does drive!) and all her other splendours,—if she would only be proud of him as the great broker—not to speak of his varied knowledge, of which she might also well be proud,—if she would take some little pains to interest herself in his pleasures and to bring him forward in society,—how easily she could correct and soften his little uncouthness of person and dress, if she would take the trouble! Why should she be ashamed of him? He is older than she—how much? ten years perhaps, or twelve at most. He is not a beauty; but in a man, I should say, mind comes before good looks; and how infinitely superior he is in mind and soul to any of the frivolous little beaux, native or foreign, whom she delights to draw about her!'

'I fear I never shall be able to regard Mr. Harrison with as much respect as you do. It may be ignorance,

but I never could see much difference between a speculator in stocks and a gambler.'

'When a man is in his predicament domestically there are three things, to one, two, or all of which he is pretty sure to take—drink, gambling, and horses. Harrison is too purely intellectual a man to be led away by the vulger animal temptation of liquor, though he has a good cellar, and sometimes consoles himself with a snug bachelor dinner. Stockjobbing is, as you say, only another sort of gambling, and this is his vice: at the same time you will consider that it is his business, to which he was brought up. Then, for absolute relaxation, he has his 'fast crab.' Put him behind his 2′ 45″ stepper, and he is happy for an hour or two, and forgets his miseries—that is to say, his wife.'

'But you talk as if his marriage was the cause of his speculations, whereas you told me the other day that his speculations were the indirect cause of his marriage.'

'You are right: I believe the beginning of that bad habit must be set down to his father's account; but the continuance of it is still chargeable on his wife. I have heard him say myself, that he would have retired from business long ago but for Mrs. Harrison—that is to say, he had to go on making money to supply her extravagance.'

One fine morning there was a great bustle and flurry; moving of trunks and paying of bills, and preparations for departure. The fashionables were fairly starved out, and had gone off in a body. The brilliant equipages of Ludlow and Löwenberg, the superfine millinery of the Robinsons, the song and story of the Vicomte, the indefatigable revolutions of Edwards, were all henceforth to be lost to the sojourners at Oldport. Mr. Grabster heeded not this practical protest against the error of his

ways. He had no difficulty in filling the vacant rooms, for a crowd of people from all parts of the Union constantly thronged Oldport, attracted by its reputation for coolness and salubrity; and he rather preferred people from the West and South, as they knew less about civilized life, and were more easily imposed upon. To be sure, even they would find out in time the deficiencies of his establishment, and report them at home; but meanwhile he hoped to fill his pockets for two or three seasons under cover of *The Sewer's* puffs, and then, when business fell off, to impose on his landlord with some plausible story, and obtain a lowering of his rent.

Some few—a very few—of 'our set' were left. Our friend Harry stayed, because the air of the place agreed remarkably with the infant hope of the Bensons; and a few of the beaux remained—among them Sumner, Bell, and Sedley—either out of friendship for Benson or retained by the attractions of Mrs. Benson, or those of Mrs. Harrison; for the *lionne* stayed of course, it being her line to do just whatever the exclusives did not do. But though Benson remained, he was not disposed to suffer in silence. All this while *The Sewer* had been filled with letters lauding everything about the Bath Hotel; and communications equally disinterested, and couched in the same tone, had found their way into some more respectable prints. Benson undertook the thankless task of undeceiving the public. He sat down one evening and wrote off a spicy epistle to *The Blunder and Bluster*, setting forth how things really were at Oldport. Two days after, when the New-York mail arrived, great was the wrath of Mr. Grabster. He called into council the old gentleman with the melodious daughter, *The Sewer* reporters, and some other boarders who were in his confidence; and made magnificent but rather vague

promises, of what he would do for the man who should discover the daring individual who had thus bearded him in his very den: simultaneously he wrote to *The Blunder and Bluster*, demanding the name of the offender. With most American editors, such a demand (especially if followed up with a good dinner or skilfully applied tip to the reporter or correspondent) would have been perfectly successful. But he of *The Blunder and Bluster* was a much higher style of man. As Benson once said of him, he had, in his capacity of the first political journalist in the country, associated so much with gentlemen, that he had learned to be something of a gentleman himself. Accordingly he replied to Mr. Grabster, in a note more curt than courteous, that it was impossible to comply with his request. So the indignant host was obliged to content himself for the time with ordering *The Sewer* to abuse the incognito. Before many days, however, he obtained the desired information through another source, in this wise.

Oldport had its newspaper, of course. Every American village of more than ten houses has its newspaper. Mr. Cranberry Fuster, who presided over the destinies of *The Oldport Daily Twaddler*, added to this honorable and amiable occupation the equally honorable and amiable one of village attorney. Though his paper was in every sense a small one, he felt and talked as big as if it had been *The Times*, or *The Moniteur*, or *The Blunder and Bluster*. He held the President of the United States as something almost beneath his notice, and was in the habit of lecturing the Czar of Russia, the Emperor of Austria, and other foreign powers, in true Little Pedlington style. Emboldened by the impunity which attended these assaults, he undertook to try his hand on matters nearer home, and boldly essayed one season to

write down the polka and redowa as indecent and immoral. But here he found, as Alexander, Napoleon, and other great men, had done before him, that there is a limit to all human power. He might better have tried to write off the roof of the Bath Hotel, which was rather a fragile piece of work, and might have been carried away by much less wind than usually served to distend the columns of *The Twaddler*. The doughty Tom Edwards snapped his heels, so to speak, in the face of the mighty editor, and the exclusives continued to polk more frantically than ever in the teeth of his direst fulminations. One practical effect, however, these home diatribes had, which his luminous sallies on foreign affairs altogether failed to effect—they put money into his pocket. The next thing the Americans like to hearing themselves well praised, is to hear somebody, even if it be themselves, well abused; and accordingly, on the mornings when Mr. Fuster let out an anti-polka article, the usually small circulation of his small sheet was multiplied by a very large factor—almost every stranger bought a copy, the million to see the abuse of the fashionables, the fashionables to see the abuse of themselves.

Benson in the course of his almost annual visits to Oldport Springs, had been frequently amused by the antics of this formidable gentleman, and had laudably contributed to make them generally known. Once, when Mr. Fuster had politely denominated the Austrian emperor 'a scoundrel,' Harry moved *The Blunder and Bluster* to say, that it was very sorry for that potentate, who would undoubtedly be overwhelmed with mortification when he learned that *The Twaddler* entertained such an opinion of him. Whereupon Fuster, who was of a literal dulness absolutely joke-proof, struck off a flaming article on 'the aristocratic sympathies of *The Blunder*

and Bluster, which, like a British Whig and Federal journal, as it was, always came to the rescue of tyrants and despots,' &c., &c. On another occasion—the very morning of a state election—*The Twaddler* had announced, with a great flourish, 'that before its next sheet was issued Mr. Brown would be invested with the highest honours that the state could confer upon him. But even American editors are not always infallible; Mr. Brown came out sadly in the minority, and the day after *The Blunder and Bluster* had a little corner paragraph to this effect:—

'*We sincerely regret to see that our amusing little contemporary*, THE OLDPORT DAILY TWADDLER, *has suspended publication.*'

At this Mr. Fuster flared up fearfully, and threatened to sue *The Blunder and Bluster* for libel.

Now this magniloquent editor, who professed to be a great moral reformer at home, and to regulate the destinies of nations abroad, was in truth the mere creature and toady of Mr. Grabster, the greater part of the revenue of his small establishment being derived from printing the bills and advertisements of the Bath Hotel. As in duty bound, therefore, he set to work to abuse the anonymous assailant of that atrociously-kept house, calling him a quantity of heterogeneous names, and more than insinuating that he was a person who had never been in good society, and did not know what good living was, *because* he found fault with the living at the Bath Hotel. The leader wound up with a more than ever exaggerated eulogy of Mr. Grabster and his 'able and gentlemanly assistants.' Benson happened to get hold of this number of *The Twaddler* one evening when he had nothing to do, and those dangerous implements, pen, ink, and paper, were within his reach. Beginning to note

down the absurdities and *non sequiturs* in Mr. Fuster's article, he found himself writing a very chaffy letter to *The Twaddler*. He had an unfortunate talent for correspondence had Benson, like most of his countrymen; so, giving the reins to his whim, he finished the epistle, making it very spicy and satirical, with a garnish of smiles and classical quotations—altogether rather a neat piece of work, only it might have been objected to as a waste of cleverness, and building a large wheel to break a very small bug upon. Then he dropped it into the post-office himself, never dreaming that Cranberry would publish it, but merely anticipating the wrath of the little-great man on receiving such a communication. It chanced, however, not long before, that Benson, in the course of some legal proceedings, had been to sign papers and 'take fifty cents' worth of affidavit,' as he himself phrased it, before Mr. Fuster in his legal capacity. The latter gentleman had thus the means of identifying, by comparison, the handwriting of the pseudonymous letter. In a vast fit of indignation, not unmingled with satisfaction, he brought out next day Harry's letter at full length, to the great peril of the Latin quotations, and then followed it up with a rejoinder of his own, in which he endeavored to take an attitude of sublime dignity, backed up by classical quotations also, to show that he understood Latin as well as Benson. But the attempt was as unsuccessful as it was elaborate, for his anger broke through in every other sentence, making the intended 'smasher' an extraordinary compound of superfine writing and vulgar abuse.

When, in the course of human events (he began) it becomes necessary for men holding our lofty and responsible position to stoop to the chastisement of pretentious ignorance and imbecility, we shall not be found to shrink from the task. The writer of the above

letter is Mr. Henry Benson, a young man of property, and a Federal Whig. He insinuates that we are very stupid. It's no such thing; we are not stupid a bit, and we mean to show Mr. B. as much before we have done with him. Mr. Benson is a pompous young aristocrat, and Mr. Grabster is more of a gentleman than he is—and so are we too for that matter. He says the Bath Hotel is a badly kept house. We say it isn't, and we know a great deal better than he does. We have dined there very often, and found the fare and attendance excellent; and so did the Honourable Theophilus Q. Smith, of Arkansas, last summer, when he came to enjoy the invigorating breezes of this healthful locality. This distinguished and remarkable man expressed himself struck with the arrangements of the Bath Hotel, which left him no cause, he said, to regret the comforts of his western home. But this establishment cannot please the fastidious Mr. Benson! *O tempora, O Moses!* as Cicero said to Cataline, *quosque tandem?*

And so on for three columns.

Likewise *The Sewer*, which had begun to blackguard *The Blunder and Bluster's* correspondent while he remained under the shelter of his pseudonym, now that his name was known, came out with double virulence, and filled half a sheet with filthy abuse of Harry, including collateral assaults on his brother, grandmother, and second cousins, and most of the surviving members of his wife's family. But as Benson never read *The Sewer*, this part of the attack was an utter waste of Billingsgate so far as he was concerned. What did surprise and annoy him was to find that *The Inexpressible*, which though well-known to be a stupid, was generally considered a decent paper, had taken the enemy's side, and published some very impertinent paragraphs about him. Afterwards he discovered that he had been the victim of a principle. *The Inexpressible* and *Blunder and Bluster* had a little private quarrel of their own, and the former felt bound to attack everything in any way connected with the latter.

Nevertheless Benson was not very much distressed

even at this occurrence, for a reason which we shall now give at length, and which will at the same time explain the propriety of the heading we have given to this number. While everybody was reading *The Sewer* and *The Twaddler*, and the more benevolent were pitying Harry for having started such a nest of editorial and other blackguards about his ears, and the more curious were wondering whether he would leave the hotel and resign the field of battle to the enemy, our friend really cared very little about the matter, except so far as he could use it for a blind to divert attention from another affair which he had on hand, and which it was of the greatest importance to keep secret, lest it should draw down the interference of the local authorities: in short, he had a defiance to mortal combat impending over him, which dangerous probability he had brought upon himself in this wise.

Among the beaux who remained after the Hegira of the fashionables, was a Mr. Storey Hunter, who had arrived at Oldport only just before that great event, for he professed to be a traveller and a travelling man, and, to keep up the character, never came to a place when other people did, but always popped up unexpectedly in the middle, or at the end of a season, as if he had just dropped from the moon, or arrived from the antipodes. He had an affectation of being foreign—not English, or French, or German, or like any particular European nation, but foreign in a general sort of way, something not American; and always, on whichever side of the Atlantic he was, hailed from some locality; at one time describing himself in hotel books as from England, at another as from Paris, at another from Baden—from anywhere, in short, except his own native village in Connecticut. In accordance with this

principle, moreover, he carefully eschewed the indigenous habits of dress; and while all the other men appeared at the balls in dress coats, and black or white cravats, he usually displayed a flaming scarlet or blue tie, a short frock coat, and yellow or brown trousers. A man six feet high, and nearly as many round, is a tolerably conspicuous object in most places, even without any marked peculiarities of dress; and when to this it is added, that Mr. Hunter exhibited on his shirt front and watch-chain trinkets enough to stock a jeweller's shop, and that he was always redolent of the most fashionable perfumes, it may be supposed that he was not likely to escape notice at Oldport. His age no one knew exactly; some of the old stagers gave him forty years and more, but he was in a state of wonderful preservation, had a miraculous dye for his whiskers, and a perpetual fresh colour in his cheeks. Sedley used to say he rouged, and that you might see the marks of it inside his collar; but this may have been only an accident in shaving. He rather preferred French to English in conversation; and with good reason, for when he used the former language you might suppose (with your eyes shut) that you were talking to a very refined gentleman, whereas, as soon as he opened his mouth in the vernacular, the provincial Yankee stood revealed before you. As to his other qualities and merits, he appeared to have plenty of money, and was an excellent and indefatigable dancer. Ashburner, when he saw him spin round morning after morning, and night after night, till he all but melted away himself, and threatened to drown his partner, thought he must have the laudable motive of wishing to reduce his bulk, which, however, continued undiminished. Notwithstanding his travels and accomplishments, which, especially the dancing, were sufficient

to give him a passport to the best society, there were some who regarded him with very unfavourable eyes, more particularly Sumner and Benson. Supposing this to be merely another of the frivolous feuds that existed in the place, and among 'our set,' Ashburner was not over anxious or curious to know the cause of it. Nor, if he had been, did the parties seem disposed to afford him such information. Benson had, indeed, observed one day that *that* Storey Hunter was the greatest blackguard in Oldport, except the *Sewer* reporters: but as he had already said the same thing of half-a-dozen men, his friend was not deterred thereby from making Hunter's acquaintance—or rather, from accepting it; the difficulty at Oldport being, *not* to make the acquaintance of any man in society. And he found the fat dandy, to all appearance, an innocent and good-natured person, rather childish for his years, and well illustrating Harrison's assertion, that the men in fashionable life rather retrograded than developed from twenty to forty; but in no apparent respect formidable, save for a more than American tendency to gossip. He had some story to the prejudice of every one, but seemed to tell all these stories just as an *enfant terrible* might, without fully understanding them, or at all heeding the possible consequences of repeating them.

The glory of the balls had departed with Edwards and the Robinsons, but the remaining fashionables kept up their amusement with much vigour; and the absence of the others, though detracting much from the brilliancy of the place, was in some respects the gain of a loss. Bell came out in all his glory now that most of the young men were gone. With his graceful figure, neat dress, and ever-ready smile and compliment, he looked the very ideal of the well-drilled man of fashion. Sum-

ner, though he could not have talked less if he had been an English heavy dragoon-officer, or an Hungarian refugee, understanding no language but his own, was very useful for a quiet way he had of arranging everything beforehand without fuss or delay, and, moreover, had the peculiar merit (difficult to explain, but which we have all observed in some person at some period of our lives) of *being good company without talking.* Benson, with less pretence and display than he had before exhibited, showed an energy and indefatigableness almost equal to Le Roi's; whatever he undertook, he 'kept the pot a-boiling.' In short, the people of 'our set,' who were left, went on among themselves much better than before, because the men's capabilities were not limited to dancing, and the women had less temptation to be perpetually dressing. Besides, the removal of most of the fashionables had encouraged the other portions of the transient population to come more forward and exhibit various specimens of primitive dancing, and other traits worth observing. One evening there was a 'hop' at the Bellevue. Ashburner made a point of always looking in at these assemblies for an hour or so, and scrutinizing the company with the coolness and complacency which an Englishman usually assumes in such places, as if all the people there were made merely for his amusement. Benson, who had literally poked the heel off one of his boots, and thereby temporarily disabled himself, was lounging about with him, making observations on men, women, and things generally.

'You wouldn't think that was only a girl of seventeen,' said Harry, as a languishing brunette, with large, liquid, black eyes, and a voluptuous figure, glided by them in the waltz. 'How soon these Southerners develope into women! They beat the Italians even.'

'I wonder the young lady has time to grow, she dances so much. I have watched her two or three evenings, and she has never rested a moment except when the music stopped. Something must suffer, it seems to me. Does her mind develope uniformly with her person? She is a great centre of attraction, I observe; is it only for her beauty and dancing?'

'I suppose a beautiful young woman, with fifty or sixty thousand a-year, may consider mental accomplishments as superfluous. She knows, perhaps, as much as a Russian woman of five-and-twenty. How much that is, you, who have been on the Continent, know.'

'Ah, an heiress; acres of cotton-fields; thousands of negroes, and so on.'

'Exactly. I put the income down at half of what popular report makes it; these Southern fortunes are so uncertain; the white part of the property (that is to say, the cotton) varies with the seasons; and the black part takes to itself legs and runs off occasionally. But, at any rate, there is quite enough to make her a great prize, and an object of admiration and attention to all the little men—not to the old hands, like Bell and Sumner; they are built up in their own conceit, and wouldn't marry Sam Weller's 'female marchioness,' unless she made love to them first, like one of Knowles's heroines. But the juveniles are crazy about her. Robinson went off more ostentatiously love-sick than any man of his size I ever saw; and Sedley is always chanting her praises—the only man, woman, or child, he was ever known to speak well of. I don't think any of them will catch her. Edwards might dance into her heart, perhaps, if he were a little bigger; but as it is, she will, probably, make happy and rich some one in her own part of the world. She says the young men there suit

her better, because they are 'more gentlemanly' than we Northerners.'

'I have heard many strangers say the same thing,' said Ashburner, prudently refraining from expressing any opinion of his own, for he knew Benson's anti-Southern feelings.

'If education has anything to do with being a gentleman, then, whether you take *education* in the highest sense, as the best discipline and expansion of the mind by classical and scientific study; or in the utilitarian sense, as the acquisition of useful knowledge, and a practical acquaintance with men and things; or in the fine-lady sense, as the mastery of airs, and graces, and drawing-room accomplishments; or in the moralist's sense, as the curbing of our mischievous propensities, and the energizing of our good ones—in every case, we are more of gentlemen than the Southerners. If the mere possession of wealth, and progress in the grosser and more material arts of civilization, have anything to do with it, then, too, we are more of gentlemen. Their claims rest on two grounds: first, they live on the unpaid labour of others, while we all work, more or less, for ourselves, holding idleness as disgraceful as they do labour; secondly, they are all the time fighting duels.'

'Are there no duels ever fought in this part of the country?'

'Scarcely any since Burr shot Hamilton. Alexander Hamilton was one of our greatest men, and his death excited a feeling throughout the Northern States which put down the practice almost entirely; and I certainly think it a step forward in real civilization.'

'Do you mean to say that it is with you as with us, where, if a man becomes so involved in a quarrel that he is challenged, it is against him and almost ruin to him

whether he fights or does not fight? Or is public opinion decidedly in favour of the man who does not fight, and against the man who does? For instance, suppose you were challenged yourself?'

'A man can't say beforehand what he would do in an emergency of the kind; but my impression is that I should not fight, and that the opinion of society would bear me out.'

'But suppose a man insulted your wife, or sister?'

'It is next door to impossible that an American gentleman should do such a thing; but if he did, I should consider that he had reduced himself to the level of a snob, and should treat him as I would any snob in the streets,—knock him down, if I was able; and if I wasn't, take the law of him: and if a man had wronged me irreparably, I fancy I should do as these uncivilized Southerners themselves do in such a case,—shoot him down in the street wherever I could catch him. What sense or justice is there in a duel? It is as if a man stole your coat, and instead of having him put into prison, you drew lots with him whether you or he should go.'

'But suppose a man was spreading false reports about you; suppose he said you were no gentleman, or that you had cheated somebody?'

'Bah!' replied Benson, dexterously evading the most important part of the question, 'if I were to fight all the people that spread false reports about me, I should have my hands full. There is a man in this room that slandered me as grossly as he could four years ago, and was very near breaking off my marriage. That fat man there with all the jewellery—Storey Hunter.'

'Indeed!' exclaimed the other, really surprised, for he had just seen Mrs. Benson conversing with the ponderous exquisite apparently on most amicable terms.

'Yes, and it was entirely gratuitous. I never gave the scamp any provocation. By Jupiter!' Benson turned very white and then very red, 'if he isn't dancing with my wife! His impudence is too much, and—— I believe one of our women would put up with anything from a man here if he can only dance well. They have no self-respect.'

Benson appeared to have very little himself at that moment, and not to care much what he said or did. He trembled all over with rage, and his friend expected to see an immediate outbreak; but, as if recollecting himself, he suddenly stammered out something about the necessity of changing his boots, and limped off accordingly for that purpose. He was not gone more than five minutes, but in that time had contrived not only to supply his pedal deficiency, but also to take a drink by way of calming himself; and after the drink he took a turn with Miss Friskin, and whirled her about the room till he knocked over two or three innocent bystanders, all which tended very much to compose his feelings. Ashburner had a presentiment that something would happen, and stayed longer that night than his wont; indeed till the end of the ball, which, as there was now no German cotillion, lasted till only one in the morning.

But the universal panacea of the polka had its mollifying effect on Benson, and everything might have passed off quietly but for an unlucky accident. Some of the young Southerners had ordered up sundry bottles of champagne, and were drinking in the same corner. Hunter who was much given to toadying Southerners (another reason for Benson's dislike of him), mingled among them and partook of the inspiring beverage. *In vino veritas* is true as gospel, if you understand it

rightly as meaning that wine developes a man's real nature. Hunter, being by nature gossipy and mendacious, waxed more and more so with every glass of Heidseck he took down. Ashburner chancing to pass near the group, had his attention arrested by hearing Benson's name. He stopped and listened; Hunter was going on with a prolix and somewhat confused story of some horse that Benson had sold to somebody, in which transaction Sumner was somehow mixed up, and the horse hadn't turned out well, and the purchaser wasn't satisfied, and so on.'

'If Benson hear this!' thought Ashburner.

And Benson did hear it very promptly, for Sedley was within ear-shot, and, delighted at having a piece of mischief to communicate, he tracked Harry out at the further extremity of the room, to inform him of the liberties Storey Hunter was taking with his name. Whereupon the slandered one, with all his wrath reawakened, traversed the apartment in time to hear the emphatic peroration that, 'bad as Sumner was, Benson was a thousand times worse.'

'I can't stand this,' exclaimed he. 'Where's Frank Sumner?' Sumner was not visible. 'Ashburner, will you stand by me if there's a row?'

By this time the ball was breaking up, and Benson, on going back to look for his party, found that Mrs. B., like a true watering-place *belle*, had gone off without waiting for him. This was exactly what he wanted.—Keeping his eye on Hunter, he followed him out to the head of the staircase, where he had just been bidding good night to some ladies. No one was in sight but Ashburner, who happened to be standing just outside the door-way. The fat man nodded to Harry as if they had been the best friends in the world.

'Curse his impudence!' exclaimed Benson, now fairly boiling over. 'Holla, you Hunter! did you know you were an infernal scoundrel? Because you are.'

'What for?' quoth the individual in question, half sobered and half disconcerted by this unceremonious address.

'And a contemptible blackguard,' continued Benson, following up his verbal attack.

'You're another,' retorted Hunter.

Ashburner wondered if the two men were going to stand slanging each other all night.

'I ought to have pulled your nose three years ago, and now take that!' and Benson, who had been working at his glove ever since the parley began, twitched it off and slapped Hunter in the face with it.

When an Irishman sees two people fighting, or going to fight, his natural impulse is to urge them on. A Scotchman or an American tries to part them. A Frenchman runs after the armed force. An Englishman does nothing but look quietly on, unless one side meets with foul play. Thus it was with Ashburner in the present instance. He took Benson's request 'to stand by him in case of a row,' *au pied de la lettre.* He stood by him, and that was all.

As soon as Hunter felt the glove in his face he struck out at Benson, who stopped the blow very neatly, and seemed about to return it with a left-hander; then suddenly changing his style of attack, he rushed within the other's guard, and catching him by the throat with both hands, did his best to strangle him. Hunter, unable to call for help to loosen the throttling grasp of his assailant, threw himself bodily upon him. As he was about twice Benson's size and weight, the experiment succeeded. Harry was thrown off his feet and precipitated

against the banisters, which being of slight material, gave way like so much paper, and both men tumbled over into the landing-place below amid a great scattering of splinters. Lighting on their feet, they began to pommel each other without doing more damage than a couple of children, for they were at such close quarters, and so blinded by rage, that they hit wild; but Benson had caught his man by the throat again, and was just getting him into chancery, when Bell, Sedley, and some of the Southerners, attracted by the noise, ran down stairs, calling on the 'gentlemen' to 'behave as such,' and words proving ineffectual, endeavouring to pull them apart; which was no easy matter, for Benson hung on like grim death, and when his hand was removed from Hunter's collar, caught him again by the nose, nor would he give up till Mr. Simpson, who was one of the stoutest and most active men in the place, caught him from behind and fairly carried him off to the hall below. Then he seemed to come to himself all at once, and recollected that he had invited the remains of 'our set' to supper that night. And accordingly, after taking a rapid survey of himself in a glass, and finding that his face bore no marks of the conflict, and that his dress was not more disordered than a man's usually is when he has been polking all the evening, he went off to meet his company, and a very merry time they had of it. Ashburner was surprised to find that the spectators of the fray were able to ignore it so completely. If they had been old men and old soldiers, they could not have acted with more discretion, and it was impossible to suspect from their conversation or manner that anything unpleasant had occurred. 'These people do know how to hold their tongues sometimes,' thought he.

Next morning, while strolling about before breakfast

(he was the earliest riser of the young men in the place, as he did not dance or gamble), he heard firing in the pistol-gallery. He thought of his conversation with Benson and the occurrences of last night, and then recollected that he was out of practice himself, and that there would be no harm in trying a few shots. So he strode over to the gallery, and there, to his astonishment, found on one side of the door the keeper, on the other Frank Sumner (who had given a most devoted proof of friendship by getting up two hours earlier in the morning than he had ever been known to before); and between them Benson, blazing away at the figure, and swearing at himself for not making better shots.

'Take time by the forelock,' you see, said he, as he recognized Ashburner. '*Nunquam non paratus.* The fellow will send me a challenge this morning, I suppose, and I want to be ready for him. I shall practise till the very moment I go out.'

'But do you know,' said the Englishman, 'if after that you should kill your man, we in our country should call it something very like murder?'

'That may be,' answered Harry, as he let fly again, this time ringing the bell; 'but we only call it practice.'

CHAPTER VIII.

LIFE AT A WATERING-PLACE.—THE LION IN THE TOILS.

WHAT followed the events related in our last number gave Ashburner a lesson against making up his mind too hastily on any points of character, national or individual. A fortnight after his arrival at Oldport he would have said that the Americans were the most communicative people he had ever fallen in with, and particularly, that the men of 'our set' were utterly incapable of keeping secret any act or purpose of their lives, anything that had happened, or was going to happen. *Now* he was surprised at the discretion shown by the men cognizant of the late row (and they comprised all the fashionables left in the place, and some of the outsiders, like Simpson); their dexterity and skilful management, first, to prevent the affair from coming to a fight, and then, if that were impossible, to keep it from publicity until the parties were safe over the border into Canada, where they might 'shoot each other like gentlemen,' as a young gentleman from Alabama expressed it. Sedley himself, whose officiousness had precipitated the quarrel, did all in his power to prevent any further mischief, and was as sedulous for the promotion of *silencio* and *misterio*, as if he had been leader of a chorus of Venetian Senators. *The Sewer* reporters, who in their eagerness to collect every bit of gossip and scandal, would

have given the ears which an outraged community had permitted them to retain for a knowledge of the fracas and its probable consequences, never had the least inkling of it. Indeed, so quietly was the whole managed, that Ashburner never made out the cause of the old feud, nor was able to form any opinion on the probability of its final issue. On the former point he could only come to the conclusion, from what he heard, that Hunter had been mythologizing, as his wont was, something to Benson's discredit several years before, and had been trying to make mischief between him and some of his friends or relations; but what the exact offence was, whether Sumner was involved in the quarrel from the first, and if so, to what extent; and whether the legend about the horse was a part of, or only an addition to the original grievance;—on these particulars he remained in the dark. As to the latter, he knew that Hunter had not challenged Benson, and that he had left the place, but whether to look up a friend or not, no one seemed to know, or if they did, no one cared to tell. At any rate, he did not return for a week and more, during which time Ashburner had full opportunity of studying the behaviour and feelings of a man with a duel in prospect.

Those who defend and advocate the practice of duelling, if asked to explain the motives leading a gentleman to fight, would generally answer somewhat to this effect: —in the first place, personal courage, which induces a man to despise danger and death, in comparison with any question affecting his own honour, or that of those connected with him; secondly, a respect for the opinion of the society in which he moves, which opinion, to a certain extent, supplies and fixes the definition of honour. Hence it would follow that,—given a man who is neither physically brave, nor bound by any particular respect for

the opinion of his daily associates and the world he moves in, such a man would not be likely to give or accept a challenge. The case under Ashburner's observation afforded a palpable contradiction to this conclusion.

Henry Benson was not personally valorous: what courage he possessed was rather of a moral than a physical kind. Where he appeared to be daring and heedless, it proved on examination to be the result of previous knowledge and practice, which gave him confidence and armed him with impunity. Thus he would drive his trotters at anything, and shave through 'tight places' on rough and crowded roads, his whiffle-trees tipping and his hubs grazing the surrounding wheels in a way that at first made Ashburner shudder in spite of himself; but it was because his experience in wagon-driving enabled him to measure distances within half-an-inch, and to catch an available opening immediately. On the other hand, in their pedestrian trips across country in Westchester, he was very chary of jumping fences or ditches till he had ascertained by careful practice his exact capacity for that sort of exercise. He would ride his black horse, Daredevil, who was the terror of all the servants and women in his neighbourhood, because he had made himself perfectly acquainted with all the animal's stock of tricks, and was fully prepared for them as they came; but he never went the first trip in a new steamboat or railroad line. He ate and drank many things considered unhealthy, because he understood exactly from experience what and how much he could take without injury: but you could not have bribed him to sit fifteen minutes in wet boots. In short, he was a man who took excellent care of himself, *canny* as a Scot or a New-Englander, loving the good things of life, and not disposed to hazard them on slight grounds. Then as to the appro-

bation or disapprobation of those about him, he was almost entirely careless of it. On any point beyond the cut of a coat, the decoration of a room, the concoction of a dish, or the merits of a horse, there were not ten people in his own set whose opinion he heeded. To the remarks of foreigners he was a little more sensitive, but even these he was more apt to retort upon by a *tu quoque* than to be influenced by. Add to all this, that he had the convenient excuse of being a communicant at church, which in America implies something like a formal profession of religion. Yet at this time he was not only willing, but most eager to fight. The secret lay in his state of recklessness. A moment of passion had overturned all his instincts, principles, and common-sense, and inspired him wth the feverish desire to pay off his old debts to Storey Hunter, at whatever cost. And as neither the possession of extraordinary personal courage, nor a high sense of conventional honour, nor a respect for the opinion of society, necessarily induces a feeling of recklessness, so neither does the absence of these qualities prevent the presence of this feeling, exactly the most favourable one to make a man engage in a duel. Moralists have called such a condition one of temporary madness, and it has probably as good grounds to be classed with insanity as many of the pleas known to medical and criminal jurisprudence.

Be this as it may, Ashburner had a good opportunity of observing—and the example, it is to be hoped, was of service to him—the demoralization induced upon a man by the mere impending possibility of a duel. Benson seemed careless what he did. He danced frantically, and drank so much at all hours, that the Englishman, though pretty strong-headed himself, wondered how he could keep sober. He was openly seen reading *The*

Blackguard's Own, a weekly of the *Sewer* species. He made up trotting matches with every man in the place who owned a 'fast crab,' and with some acquaintances at a distance, by correspondence. He kept studiously out of the way of his wife and child, lest their influence might shake his determination. All this time he practised pistol-shooting most religiously. Neither of the belligerents had ever given a public proof of skill in this line. Hunter's ability was not known, and Benson's shooting so uncertain and variable when any one looked on, that those in the secret suspected him of playing dark and disguising his hand. All which added to the interest of the affair.

But when eleven days had passed without signs or tidings of Hunter, and it seemed pretty clear that he had gone away 'for good,' Benson started up one morning, and went off himself to New-York, at the same time with Harrison, whose brief and not very joyous holidays had come to a conclusion. He accompanied the banker, in accordance with the true American principle, always to have a lion for your companion when you can; and as Harrison was still a man of note in Wall-Street, however small might be his influence in his own household, Benson liked to be seen with him, and to talk anything—even stocks—to him, though he had no particular interest in the market at that time. But whether an American is in business himself or not, the subject of business is generally an interesting one to him, and he is always ready to gossip about dollars. The unexampled material development of the United States is only maintained by a condition of society which requires every man to take a share in assisting that development, and the most frivolous and apparently idle men are found sharp enough in pecuniary matters. This trait of national character

lies on the surface, and foreigners have not been slow to notice it, and to draw from it unfavourable conclusions. The supplementary and counterbalancing features of character to be observed in these very people,—that it is rather the fun of making the money than the money itself which they care for; that when it is made, they spend it freely, and part with it more readily than they earned it; that they are more liberal both in their public and private charities (considering the amount of their wealth, and of the claims upon it) than any nation in the world,—all these traits strangers have been less ready to dwell upon and do justice to.

Benson was gone, and Ashburner stayed. Why?—He had been at Oldport nearly a month; the place was not particularly beautiful, and the routine of the amusements not at all to his taste. Why did he stay? He had his secret too.

It is a melancholy but indisputable fact, that even in the most religious and moral country in the world, the bulwark of evangelical faith, and the home of the domestic virtues (meaning, of course, England), a great many mothers who have daughters to marry, are not so anxious about the real welfare, temporal and eternal, of their young ladies, as solicitous that they should acquire riches, titles, and other vanities of the world,—nay, that many of the daughters themselves act as if their everlasting happiness depended on their securing in matrimony a proper combination of the aforesaid vanities, and put out of account altogether the greatest prize a woman can gain—the possession of a true and loving heart, joined to a wise head. Now, Ashburner being a very good *parti* at home, and having run the gauntlet of one or two London seasons, had become very skittish of mammas, and still more so of daughters. He regarded the unmarried

female as a most dangerous and altogether to-be-avoided animal, and when you offered to introduce him to a young lady, looked about as grateful as if you had invited him to go up in a balloon. He expected to be rather more persecuted, if anything, in America than he had been at home; and when he met Miss Vanderlyn at Ravenswood, if his first thought had found articulate expression, it would probably have been something like this:—'Now that young woman is going to set her cap at me; what a bore it will be!'

Never was a man more mistaken in his anticipations. He encountered many pretty girls, not at all timid, ready enough to talk, and flirty enough among their own set, but not one of them threw herself at him, and least of all did Miss Vanderlyn. Not that the young lady was the victim of a romantic attachment, for she was perfectly fancy free and heart whole; nor, on the other hand, that she was at all insensible to the advantages of matrimony, for she kept a very fair look-out in that direction, and had, if not absolutely down on her books, at least engraved on the recording tablets of her mind, four distinct young gentlemen, combining the proper requisites, any of whom would suit her pretty well, and one of whom—she didn't much care which—she was pretty well resolved to marry within the next two years. And as she was stylish and rather handsome, clever enough, and tolerably provided with the root of all evil, besides having that fortunate good humour and accommodating disposition which go so far towards making a woman a belle and a favourite, there was a sufficient probability that before the expiration of that time, one of the four would offer himself. But all her calculations were founded on shrewd common sense; her imagination took no flights, and her aspirations only extended to the ordinary

and possible. That this young and strange Englishman, travelling as a part of education, the son of a great man, and probably betrothed by proxy to some great man's daughter, or going into parliament to be a great man himself, and remain a bachelor for the best part of his life,—that between him and herself there should be anything in common, any point of union which could make even a flirtation feasible, never entered into her head. She would as soon have expected the King of Dahomey to send an embassy with ostrich feathers in their caps, and rings in their noses, formally to ask her hand in marriage. Nay, even if the incredible event had come to pass, and the young stranger had taken the initiative, even then she would not by any means have jumped at the bait. For in the first place, she was fully imbued with the idea that the Vanderlyns were quite as good as any other people in the world, and that (the ordinary conceit of an American belle) to whatever man she might give her hand, all the honour would come from her side, and all the gain be his; therefore she would not have cared to come into a family who might suspect her of having inveigled their heir, and look down upon her as something beneath them, because she came from a country where there were no noblemen. Secondly, there is a very general feeling among the best classes in America, that no European worth anything at home comes to America to get married. The idea is evidently an imperfect generalization, and liable to exceptions; but the prevalence of it shows more modesty in the 'Upper Ten's' appreciation of themselves than they usually have credit for. As soon, therefore, as a foreigner begins to pay attention to a young lady in good notoriety, it is *primâ facie* ground of suspicion against him. The reader will see from all this how little chance there was of Ashburner's

running any danger from the unmarried women about him. With the married ones the case was somewhat different. It may be remembered that at his first introduction to Mrs. Henry Benson, the startling contrast she exhibited to the adulation he had been accustomed to receive, totally put him down; and that afterwards she softened off the rough edge of her satire, and became very *piquante* and pleasing to him. And as she greatly amused him, so he began to suspect that she was rather proud of having such a lion in her train, as no doubt she was, notwithstanding the somewhat rough and cub-like stage of his existence. So he began to hang about her and follow her around in his green, awkward way, and look large notes of admiration at her; and she was greatly diverted, and not at all displeased at his attentions. I don't know how far it might have gone; Ashburner was a very correct and moral young man as the world goes, but rather because he had generally business enough on hand to keep him out of mischief than from any high religious principle; and I am afraid that, in spite of the claims of propriety, and honour, and friendship, and the avenging Zeus of hospitality, and every other restraining motive, he would have fallen very much in love with Mrs. Benson but for one thing.

He was hopelessly in love with Mrs. Harrison. How or when it began he couldn't tell; but he found himself under the influence imperceptibly, as a man feels himself intoxicated. Sometimes he fancied that there had been a kind of love at first sight—that with the first glimpse he had of her, something in his heart told him that that woman was destined to exert a mastery over him; yet his feelings must have undergone a change and growth, for he would not now have listened to any one speaking of her as Benson had done at that time. *Why* it was, he

BENSON AND ASHBURNER AT THE BALL.

could still less divine. His was certainly no blind admiration which sees no fault in its idol; he saw her faults plainly enough, and yet could not help himself. He often asked himself how it happened that if he *was* doomed to endure an illicit and unfortunate passion, it was not for Mrs. Benson rather than Mrs. Harrison; for the former was at least as clever, certainly handsomer, palpably younger, indubitably more lady-like, and altogether a higher style of woman. Yet with this just appreciation of them, there was no comparison as to his feelings towards the two. The one amused and delighted him when present; the other, in her absence, was ever rising up before his mind's eye, and drawing him after her: and when they met, his heart beat quicker, and he was more than usually awkward and confused. Perhaps there had been, in the very origin of his entanglement and passion, some guiding impulse of honour, some sense that Benson had been his friend and entertainer, and that to Harrison he was under no personal obligations. For there are many shades of honour and dishonour in dishonourable thoughts, and a little principle goes a great way with some people, like the wind commemorated by Joe Miller's Irishman, of which there was not much, *but what there was, was very high.*

Be this as it may, he was loving to perdition—or thought so, at least; and it is hard to discriminate in a very young man's case between the conceit and the reality of love. His whole heart and mind were taken up with one great, all-pervading idea of Mrs. Harrison, and he was equally unable to smother and to express his flame. He was dying to make her a present of something, but he could send nothing without a fear of exciting suspicion, except bouquets, and of these floral luxuries, though they were only to be procured at Old-

port with much trouble and expense, she had always a supply from other quarters. He did not like to be one of a number in his offerings; he wanted to pay her some peculiar tribute. He would have liked to fight some man for her, to pick a quarrel with some one who had said something against her. Proud and sensitive to ridicule as he was, he would have laid himself down in her way, and let her walk over him, could he have persuaded himself that she would be gratified by such a proof of devotion, and that it would help his cause with her.

Had Benson been in Oldport now, there might have been trouble, inasmuch as he was not particular about what he said, and not too well disposed towards Mrs. Harrison, while Ashburner was just in the state of mind to have fought with his own father on that theme. But Benson was away, and his absence at this time was not a source of regret to Ashburner, who felt a little afraid of him, and with some reason, for our friend Harry was as observant as if he had a fly's allowance of eyes, and had a knack of finding out things without looking for them, and of knowing things without asking about them; and he would assuredly have noticed that Ashburner began to be less closely attached to his party, and to follow in the train of Mrs. Harrison. As for Clara Benson, she never troubled herself about the Englishman's falling off in his attentions to her; if anything, she was rather glad of it; her capricious disposition made her tire of a friend in a short time; she could not endure any one's uninterrupted company—not even her husband's, who therefore wisely took care to absent himself from her several times every year.

Moreover, though Ashburner was seen in attendance on the lioness, it was not constantly or in a pointed manner. He was still fighting with himself, and, like a man

run away with, who has power to guide his horse though not to stop him, he was so far able to manage his passion as to keep it from an open display. So absolutely no one suspected what was the matter with him, or that there was anything the matter with him, except the lady herself. Catch a woman not finding out when a man is in love with her! Sometimes she may delude herself with imagining a passion where none exists, but she never makes the converse mistake of failing to perceive it where it does. And how did the gay Mrs. Harrison, knowing and perceiving herself to be thus loved, make use of her knowledge? What alteration did it produce in her conduct and bearing towards her admirer? Absolutely none at all. Precisely as she had treated him at their first introduction did she continue to treat him —as if he were one of her every-day acquaintances, and nothing more. And it is precisely this line of action that utterly breaks down a man's defences, and makes him more hopelessly than ever the slave of his fair conqueror. If a woman declares open hostilities against him, runs him down behind his back, snubs him to his face, shuns his society,—this at least shows that she considers his attachment of some consequence—consequence enough to take notice of, though the notice be unfavourable. His self-respect may come to the rescue, or his piqued vanity may save him by converting love into enmity. But a perseverance in never noticing his love, and feigning to be ignorant of its existence, completely establishes her supremacy over him.

A Frenchman, who has conceived designs against a married lady, only seeks to throw dust in the husband's eyes, and then if he cannot suceeed in his final object, at least to establish sufficient intimacy to give him a plausible pretext for saying that he has succeeded; for in such

a matter he is not scrupulous about lying a little—or a great deal. An American, bad enough for a similar intention (which usually presupposes a considerable amount of *Parisianization*), acts much like a Frenchman—if anything, rather worse. An Englishman is not usually moved to the desire of an intrigue by vanity, but driven into it by sheer passion, and his first impulse is to run bodily off with the object of his misplaced affection; to take her and himself out of the country, as if he could thereby travel out of his moral responsibilities. Reader, did you ever notice, or having noticed, did you ever ponder upon the geographical distribution of morals and propriety which is so marked and almost peculiar a feature of the Anglo-Saxon mind? In certain outward looks and habits, the English may be unchangeable and unmistakeable all over the globe; but their ethical code is certainly not the same at home and abroad. It is pretty much so with an American, too, before he has become irreparably Parisianized. When he puts on his travelling habits he takes off his puritan habits, and makes light of doing things abroad which he would be the first to anathematize at home. Observe, we are not speaking of the deeply religious, nor yet of the openly profligate class in either country, but of the general run of respectable men who travel; they regard a great part of their morality and their manners as intended solely for home consumption, while a Frenchman or a German, if his home standard is not so high, lives better up to it abroad. And yet many Englishmen, and some Americans, wonder why their countrymen are so unpopular as foreign travellers!

Ashburner, then, wanted to run away with Mrs. Harrison. How he could have supported her never entered into his thoughts, nor did he consider what the effect

would be on his own prospects. He did not reflect, either, how miserably selfish it was in him, after all, to expect that this woman would give up her fortune and position, her children, her unbounded legitimate domination over her husband, for his boyish passion, and how infinitesimally small the probability that she would do so crazy a thing. Nor did Harrison ever arise before his mind as a present obstacle or future danger; and this was less frantic than most of his overlookings. The broker was a strong and courageous man, and probably had been once very much in love with his wife; but at that time, so far from putting a straw in the way of any man who wanted to relieve him of her, he would probably have been willing to pay his expenses into the bargain.

But how to declare his passion—that was the question. He saw that the initiatory steps, and very decided ones, must be taken on his part; and it was not easy to find the lady alone ten minutes together. People lived at Oldport as if they were in the open air, and the volunteer police of ordinary gossip made private interviews between well-known people a matter of extreme difficulty. A Frenchman similarly placed would have brought the affair to a crisis much sooner: he would have found a thousand ways of disclosing his feelings, and at the same time dexterously leaving himself a loop-hole of escape. Very clever at these things are the Gauls; they will make an avowal in a full ball-room, under cover of the music, if there is no other chance to be had. But tact in love affairs is not the characteristic of the Englishman, especially at Ashburner's age. He had none of this mischievous dexterity; perhaps it is just as well when a man has not, both for himself and for society. He thought of writing, and actually began many letters, or notes, or billet-doux, or whatever they

might be called; but they always seemed so absurd (as they truly were), that he invariably tore them up when half-finished. He thought of serving up his flame in verse (for about this time the unhappy youth wrote many verses, which on his return to sanity he very wisely made away with); but his emotion lay too deep for verse, and his performances seemed even to himself too ridiculous for him to dream of presenting them. Still he must make a beginning somehow; he could not ask her to run away with him apropos of nothing.

One of his great anxieties, you may be sure, was to find out if any other man stood in his way, and who that man might be. His first impulses were to be indiscriminately jealous of every man he saw talking or walking with her; but on studying out alone the results of his observations, he could not discover that she affected any one man more than another. For this was one of her happy arts, that she made herself attractive to all without showing a marked preference to any one. Bell, who among his other accomplishments, had a knack of quoting the standard poets, compared her to Pope's Belinda—saying, that her lively looks disclosed a sprightly mind, and that she extended smiles to all, and favours to none. So that Ashburner's jealousy could find no fixed object to light on. At one time he had been terribly afraid of Le Roi, chiefly from having heard the lady praise him for his accomplishments and agreeable manners. But once he heard Sedley say, that Mrs. Harrison had been worrying Le Roi half out of his wits, and quite out of his temper.

'How so?'

'Oh, she was praising you, and saying how much she liked the English character, and how true and honest your countrymen were—so much more to be

depended upon than the French—and more manly, too; and altogether she worked him up into such a rage against *ces insulaires*, that he went off ready to swear.'

And then Ashburner suspected what he afterwards became certain of—that this was only one of the pleasant little ways the woman had of amusing herself.—Whenever she found two men who were enemies, or rivals, or antagonists in any way, she would praise each to the other, on purpose to aggravate them: and very successful she was in her purpose; for she had the greatest appearance of sincerity, and whatever she said seemed to come right out of her heart. But if any lingering fears of Le Roi still haunted the Englishman's mind, they were dispelled by his departure along with the main body of the exclusives. Though always proud to be seen in the company of a conspicuous character like Mrs. Harrison, the Vicomte more particularly cultivated the fashionables proper, and gladly embraced the opportunity of following in the train of the Robinsons.

Perhaps, after all, Ashburner would have preferred being able to concentrate his suspicions upon one definite person, to feeling a vague distrust of somebody he knew not whom, especially as the presence of a rival might have brought the affair to a crisis sooner. To a crisis it was approaching, nevertheless, for his passion now began to tell on him. He looked pale, and grew nervous and weak—lay awake at nights, which he had never done before, except when going in for the Tripos at Cambridge—and was positively off his feet, which he had never been at any previous period of his life. He thought of tearing himself away from the place—the wisest course, doubtless; but, just as he had made up his mind to go by the next stage, Mrs. Harrison, as if she divined what he was about, would upset all his plans

by a few words, or a look or smile—some little expression which meant nothing, and could never be used against her; but which by a man in his state, might be interpreted to mean a great deal.

One morning the crisis came—not that there was any particular reason for it then more than at any other time, only he could hold out no longer. It was a beautiful day, and they had been strolling in one of the few endurable walks the place afforded—a winding alley near the hotel, but shrouded in trees, and it was just at the time when most of the inhabitants were at ten-pins, so that they were tolerably alone. Now, if ever, was the time; but the more he tried to introduce the subject, the less possible he found it to make a beginning, and all the while he could not avoid a dim suspicion that Mrs. Harrison knew perfectly what he was trying to drive at, and took a mischievous pleasure in saying nothing to help him along. So they talked about his travels and hers, and great people in England and France, and all sorts of people then at Oldport, and the weather even—all manner of ordinary topics; and then they walked some time without saying anything, and then they went back to the hotel. There he felt as if his last chance was slipping away from him, and in a sudden fit of desperate courage he followed her up to her parlour without waiting for an invitation. Hardly was the door closed—he would have given the world to have locked it—when he begged her 'to listen to him a few minutes on a subject of the greatest importance.' The lady opened her large round eyes a little wider; it was the only sign she gave of anything approaching to surprise. Then the young man unbosomed himself just as he stood there—not upon his knees; people used to do that—in books, at least—but nobody does now. He told her how long

he had been in love with her—how he thought of her all day and all night, and how wretched he was—how he had tried to subdue his passion, knowing it was very wrong, and so forth; but really he couldn't help it, and—and—there he stuck fast; for all the time he had been making this incoherent avowal, like one in a dream, hardly knowing what he was about, but conscious only of taking a decisive step, and doing a very serious thing in a very wild way—all this time, nevertheless, he had most closely watched Mrs. Harrison, to anticipate his sentence in some look or gesture of hers. And he saw that there did not move a line in her face, or a muscle in her whole figure—not a fibre of her dress even stirred. If she had been a great block of white marble, she could not have shown less feeling, as she stood up there right opposite him. If he had asked her to choose a waistcoat-pattern for him, she could not have heard him more quietly. As soon as he had fairly paused, so that she could speak without immediate interruption, she took up the reply. It was better that he should go no further, as she had already understood quite enough. She was very sorry to give him pain—it was always unpleasant to give pain to any one. She was also very sorry that he had so deceived himself, and so misapprehended her character, or misunderstood her conversation. He was very young yet, and had sense enough to get over this very soon. Of course, she would never hear any repetition of such language from him; and, on her part, she would never mention what had occurred to any one—especially not to Mr. Harrison (it was the first time he had ever heard her allude to the existence of that gentleman); and then she wound up with a look which said as plainly as the words could have done, 'Now, you may go.'

Ashburner moved off in a more than usual state of

confusion. As he approached the door it opened suddenly, and he nearly walked over one of the little Bleeckers, a flourishing specimen of Young New-York, with about three yards of green satin round his throat, and both his hands full of French novels, which he had been commissioned to bring from the circulating library. Ashburner felt like choking him, and it was only by a great effort that he contrived to pass him with a barely civil species of nod. But as he went out, he could not refrain from casting one glance back at Mrs. Harrison. She had taken off her bonnet (which in America is denominated a hat), and was tranquilly arranging her hair at the glass.

Somehow or other he found his way down stairs, and rushed off into the country on a tearing walk, enraged and disgusted with every thing, and with himself most of all. When a man has made up his mind to commit a sin, and then has been disappointed in the fruition of it—when he has sold the birthright of his integrity, without getting the miserable mess of pottage for it which he expected, his feelings are not the most enviable. Ashburner was angry enough to marry the first heiress he met with. First, he half resolved to get up a desperate flirtation with Mrs. Benson; but the success of his first attempt was not encouraging to the prosecution of a second. To kill himself was not in his line; but he felt very like killing some one else. He still feared he might have been made a screen for some other man.—But if the other man existed, he could only be reached by fighting successively all the single men of 'our set,' and a fair sprinkling of those in the second set. Then he thought he must at least leave the place; but his pride still revolted at the idea of running away before a woman. Finally, after walking about ten miles, and

losing his dinner, he sobered down gradually, and thought what a fool he had been; and the issue of his cogitations was a very wise double conclusion. He formed a higher opinion of the virtue of American women, and he never attempted any experiments on another.

CHAPTER IX.

A TROT ON THE ISLAND.

ASHBURNER did leave Oldport after all, before the end of the season, being persuaded to accompany a countryman and schoolmate of his (whom he had last seen, two years before, in Connaught, and who now happened to pass a day or two at Oldport, on his way Canada-ward from the South) in a trip to the White Mountains of New Hampshire; though his American acquaintances, especially the ladies, tried hard to dissuade him from starting before the grand fancy ball, with which the season terminated, assuring him that most of 'our set' would come back if only for that one night, and that it would be a very splendid affair, and so forth. Nature had more charms for him than art, and he went away to New Hampshire, making an appointment with Benson by letter to meet him at Ravenswood early in September. But a traveller cannot make sure of his movements a fortnight a-head. On his return from the White Mountains, Ashburner had his pocket picked at a railway station (these little incidents of highly civilized life are beginning to happen now and then in America; the inhabitants repudiate any native agency therein, and attribute them all to the swell-mob emigrants from England), and, in consequence, was obliged to retrace his steps as far as New-York to visit

his banker. Almost the first person he ran against in the street was Henry Benson.

'This *is* an unexpected pleasure!' exclaimed the New-Yorker. 'I never thought to see you here; and you, I presume, didn't expect to meet me.' Ashburner explained his mishap. 'Well, I meant to go straight over to Ravenswood after the ball; but we had to come home—all of us this time—on business. Lots of French furniture arrived for our town-house. Mrs. B. couldn't rest till she had seen it all herself, and had it properly arranged. So here have I been five days, fussing, and paying, and swearing (legally, you understand, not profanely) at the custom-house, and then 'hazing'—what you call slanging—upholsterers; and now that the work is all over I mean to take a little play, and am just going over to see Lady Suffolk and Trustee trot on the island. Come along. It's a beautiful drive of eight miles, and I have a top-wagon. It is to meet me at the Park in a quarter of an hour.' Ashburner assented. 'I want to buy some cigars; you have no objection to accompany me a moment?'

So they turned down one of the cross-streets running out of the lower part of Broadway (which, it may be here mentioned, for the benefit of English readers and writers, is not called *the* Broadway), and entered a 'store' five or six stories high, with two or three different firms on each floor; and Benson led the way up something between a ladder and a staircase into a small office, with 'Bleecker Brothers' dimly visible on a tin plate over the door. Three-fourths of the apartment were filled up with all manner of inviting samples, every wine, liquor and liqueur under the sun, in every variety of bottle or phial, thick with the dust of years, or open for immediate tasting; and through the dingy

panes of a half-glass door a multitudinous array of bottles might be seen loading the numerous shelves of a large store-room beyond. In a small clearing at one corner, where a small desk was kept in countenance by a small table, and three or four old chairs, with a background of shelves groaning under the choicest brands of the fragrant weed, sat the presiding deities of the place—the two little Bleeckers,—the dark brother of thirty-five, and the light brother of twenty, like two sketches of the same man in chalk and charcoal; both elegantly dressed—white trousers, patent leather shoes, exuberant cravats, massive chains, and all the usual paraphernalia of Young New-York—altogether looking as much in place as a couple of butterflies in an ant-hill.

'Good morning, gentlemen,' said Benson. 'Here's our friend Ashburner;' and he pushed forward the Englishman. The brothers rose, laid down the morning journals over which they had been lounging, and welcomed the stranger to their place of business. 'What's the news this morning?'

'Nothing at all, I believe,' replied the elder. 'South Carolina has been threatening to dissolve the Union again—and that's no news. Stay here, you can see for yourself;' and he handed one mammoth sheet to Benson, and the other to Ashburner. The first thing that struck the Englishman's eye in his, was an article which, from its being written in lines of unequal length, he judged to be verse, so, being a bold man, he went at it, and read as follows:—

'FEEGRAVE'S WRATH.

The archbishop sits in his easy chair,
Best mahogany, padded with care,
After as nice and cosy a dinner
As ever comforted saint or sinner.

Why should he look cross,
And his head often toss?
Was there any thing wrong in the *Tartare* sauce?
After so good a meal why should he be grave?
What is the matter with Archbishop Feegrave?

Ah, well may Johnny look sour and frown,
And bring his fist on the table down
With such a fling
That the glasses ring!
For this very evening has brought him news
Enough to give him a fit of the blues.
He had laid out a burying-ground of his own—
That is of his Church's—and there alone
Had ordered his flock to take their repose
When their earthly woes were brought to a close;
And a paper mendacious,
Of humbug voracious,
(Perhaps you have seen it or heard the fame of it;
An Anti-Saxon, Papist journal:
Lie-Teller was of old the name of it,
Now 'tis known as the *Slave's Diurnal:*)
A paper of which he had the discredit or
Doubtful renown of being the editor,
Took up the song all the day long,
Bidding the duckies to come and be buried,
But still there were few to Williamsburgh ferried;
For the biggest bugs of the Papist set
Were not convinced by their primate yet.
Elstob the Swede, and De Ronai the Frank,
Who had a good balance, 'twas said, at the bank,
And Hamel the Swiss, and Meisters the Teuton,
(As honest a horseman as ever drew boot on)
And all the belligerent noisy array
Of the 'first flower of earth and first jim of the say,'
Phelan the jockey, and Mullins the farrier,
Borrow the banker, and Kelly the carrier,
And Lynch the Tombs lawyer, a pleader well known
To get in a trial *at least* all his own,
And Barney Brallaghan,
And his crony O'Callaghan,
(Who often in rows had with him to the rally gone,
As Virgil says, *proximus ardet Ocalegon*),

[‘Antithesis, I suppose, like *olli* for *illi*,’ said the Englishman to himself.]

All, all, to a man, determined to try at
  Practising ‘private judgment’ a little,
Resolved not to care for Johnny F.’s flat,
  Nor heed of his mandate a single tittle,
But they and their families buried would be
Under the shady *Greenwood* tree.

This obstacle placed in the Archbishop’s path,
Awakened his innate and national wrath,
(For *Coelum* of old said a poet most wary,
Non animum mutant qui currunt trans mare),
In Latin suspicious, and English as bad,
He let off the very worst oaths to be had:
‘*Per pokerum sanctum! per illud et hoc!*
Now haven’t I sure, got an illigint flock!
And all their remonstrance such impudent gabble is,
Efficiat me meliorem Diabolus!
    Scelestissimi scelestorum!
    Hereticissimi hereticorum!
Bring me my inkstand and see how I’ll floor ’em!’

Ashburner having gone thus far into the doggerel found it utterly impossible to go any further, partly because he did not in the least understand what it was about, partly for other obvious reasons, so he looked up for explanation, and had not to look long or far.

‘Ah, I see you’ve hit upon something of mine,’ said Benson, whose glance had already taken in Ashburner and the paper and what he was reading, and apparently at least half of what he was thinking. ‘Of course you are not up to the allusions. Feegrave is the Popish archbishop here: there is a big cemetery at Greenwood, Long Island,—one of our lions, the New-York *Père la Chaise*—I must take you there some day—where all people of all religions are buried; and it turned out a

good investment for the company that owned it, and Feegrave thought that it would pay to have a cemetery of his own; accordingly he set one up, and ordered all the faithful to be buried there at six dollars a head and upwards,

Under pain of citation,
Excommunication,
And something still awfuller ending in *ation*.

But some of the sheep were not so sheepish, and grew contumacious, and hinted that whereas in several European countries Catholics and Protestants were buried side by side, and still more, whereas the archbishop himself had consecrated graves in Greenwood, therefore, &c. —in short they wouldn't be done. Then Feegrave waxed wrath, and made a vast splutter, and called them liars, and other hard names, just as your Irish patriots do.'

'Exactly,' said Ashburner, who had had some experience of such gentry. 'Your thorough-going Papist's rule is, to tell as many lies as he can himself, and call all his opponents liars as often as possible. It's a figure of speech that answers very well with a certain class of hearers and readers. And who has got the best of this dispute?'

'No one as yet,' said the elder Bleecker, 'but you may bet your life on the archbishop in the end. He is a clever old scamp, and generally manages to carry his point. He don't get put down often.'

'Except when he meets Thunderbolt in a rail-car,' said Benson. 'Did you ever hear that story? '+ John of New-York,'—*cross John*, as my brother Carl used to call him—was in the same rail-car with Thunderbolt, coming from Philadelphia to New-York; and the Congressman didn't know who he was, but probably suspected he was a priest.

'You can generally tell a priest by his looks. Even an intelligent horse will do that. Once I was riding with one of our bishops near Boston, and his nag shied suddenly at a man in a broad-brimmed hat. Says the right reverend (we don't call 'em 'my lord' in this country, you know, Ashburner), 'I shouldn't wonder if that was a Romish priest;' and we looked again, and it was. There was a Protestant horse for you! What a treasure he would have been to an Orangeman!

'So Thunderbolt began to abuse the Roman Catholics generally, and the priests particularly, and 'that brawling bigot, Johnny Feegrave,' most particularly. Feegrave, who is a wary man, polite, and self-possessed, sat through it all without saying a word; till another gentleman in the car asked Thunderbolt if he knew who that was opposite him. He didn't know. 'It's Bishop Feegrave,' says the other, in a half whisper. 'Are you Bishop Feegrave?' exclaims the native, quite off his guard. 'They call me so,' answered the other, with a quiet smile, expecting to enjoy the humiliating confusion of his denouncer; and the other passengers shared in the expectation, and were prepared for a titter at Thunderbolt's expense. But instead of attempting any apology, or showing any further embarrassment, he pulled out an eye-glass, and after looking at the Jesuit through it for some time, thus announced the result of his inspection—'Oh, you are, are you? Well, you're just the kind of looking loafer I should have expected Johnny Feegrave to be.'

'Is that story *true*, Benson?' asked the elder brother.

'I read it in a newspaper,' said Harry, looking as innocent and sanctimonious as a Jesuit caught in a—reservation.

The two Bleeckers roared. It is a standing American joke to say of the biggest possible hoax or *canard* 'I read it in a newspaper, and it must be true.'

'I don't believe Feegrave was much disconcerted either,' said the head of the firm; 'he doesn't lose his balance easily. I never heard of his being put out but once, and that was when Governor Bonkers met him. He was a jolly old Dutchman, Mr. Ashburner, who used to go about electioneering, and asking every man he came across—how he was, and how his wife and family were. When Bishop Feegrave was introduced to him, they thought the governor would know enough to vary the usual question a little; but he didn't, and asked after the Romish bishop's wife and family with all possible innocence; and Feegrave, for once in his life, was nonplussed what to answer.'

'Ah, but you haven't told the end of that,' put in Benson. 'When the governor's friends tried to explain to him the mistake he had made, and the category the Romish ecclesiastics were in, he said, 'O yas, I see, I should have asked after his lady and not after his wife.' As you say, Feegrave generally had his wits about him, no doubt. He played our custom-house a trick that they will not forget in a hurry. Soon after General Harrison and the Whigs same in, and Danielson was made collector of our port, there arrived a great lot of what the French call *articles de religion*, robes, crucifixes, and various ornaments for Feegrave's cathedral. Now these were all French goods, and subject to duty, and a notification to that effect was sent to the proper quarter. Down comes Feegrave in a great rage. 'Mr. Danielson, Mr. Danielson, we never had to do this before. Your predecessor, Mr. Hoyt, always let our articles of religion in free of duty.' 'Can't help what my predecessor, Mr.

Hoyt, used to do,' says Danielson; 'the law is so and so, as I understand it, and these articles are subject to duty. If you like, you may pay the duties under protest, and bring a suit against Uncle Sam* to recover the money.' (You see, the Loco Focos had always favoured the Romish priests to get the Irish vote. The Whigs didn't in those days—it was before our side had been corrupted by Seward, and such miserable demagogues; and Danielson wasn't sorry to see his political opponent the Bishop in a tight place.) After Feegrave had blustered awhile, and found it did no good, he tried the other tack, and began to expostulate. 'Is there no way at all, Mr. Danielson,' says he, 'by which these articles may be passed free of duty?' 'None at all,' says the other, 'unless'—and he paused, hardly knowing whether it would do to hint at such a thing, even in jest—'unless, bishop, you are willing to swear that these are *tools of your trade*.' 'And sure they are that!' quoth Feegrave, snapping him up, 'bring on your book;' and he had the goods sworn through in less than no time, before Danielson could recover himself.'

'Not a bad hit,' said the Englishman. 'Tools of his trade! So they were, sure enough; but one would not have expected him to own it so coolly.'

'Unless there was something to be got by it,' continued Benson. 'Now this is true—every word of it, though it *has* been in the newspapers; and the way I came to find it out was this. One day I saw in the advertising columns of *The Blunder and Bluster* a circular from the *Secretary of the Treasury*, stating that 'crucifixes, whether of silver or copper, images, silk and velvet vestments, and theological books, did not come under

* The United States government (U. S.)

the head of *tools of trade*, but were subject to duty.' It was a funny-looking notice, and there was evidently something behind it; so I took the trouble to inquire, and found that the cause of the order was this clever stroke of Feegrave. 'Going to the trot to-day?'

The younger brother was going, and it was near the time when he expected his wagon. Dicky wasn't. He had given up trots ten years ago—thought them low.

'Give me a few cigars before we go,' said Benson. 'What have you here that's first-rate? Carbajal, Firmezas, Antiguedad. H—m. I'll take a dozen Firmezas, and you may send me the rest of the box.'

'Don't you want some champagne—veritable Cordon Bleu—only fourteen dollars a dozen, and a discount if you take six cases?'

'And if you wish to secure some tall Lafitte, we bought some odd bottles at old Van Zandt's sale the other day. You remember drinking that wine at Wilson's last summer?'

Benson remembered it perfectly, and would take the Lafitte by all means. 'Put that down, Mr. Snipes;' and for the first time Ashburner was aware of the clerk—a very young gentleman, who appeared from behind the desk, and booked the order at it. 'And how about the champagne?'

'*J'y penserai.* Time to go. *Vamos.*' And Benson carried off his friend.

'You were a little taken aback, weren't you?' he asked, as they went in quest of the wagon. 'When you saw these men figuring in the German cotillion, and helping to lead the fashion at Oldport, you hardly expected to encounter them in such a place. Well, now, let me tell you something that will astonish you yet more. So

far from its being against these brothers in society that they are, what you would call in plain English, a superior order of grocers, it is positively in their favour; that is to say, they are more respected, better received, and stand a better chance of marrying well, than if they did nothing. They might do nothing if they chose. They had enough to live very well on *en garçon*. The Bleeckers are one of our best known and most thoroughly respectable families. The sons had no taste for books; they have a very good taste for wine and cigars, and have undertaken what they are best fit for. It's better than being nominal lawyers.'

'Pecuniarily, no doubt: but is it as good for the whole development of the individual? Was it you, or your friend Harrison, who instanced Richard Bleecker as a man who had made no progress in anything manly for fifteen years?'

'That is the fault of his natural disposition, which would not be bettered by his making believe to be a professional man, or being an avowedly idle one. He is frivolous and ornamental for a part of his time—during the rest he has his business to occupy him. If he had not that, he would spend all his time in elegant idleness, and know no more than he does now. His pursuits bring him in money, which will be a comfort to his wife and family when he marries—though, to be sure, he is rather ancient for that; a single man at thirty-five is with us a confirmed old bachelor. But his brother is in a fair way to form a nice establishment.'

'Now tell me another thing. Suppose the Bleeckers had chosen to become jewellers or merchant tailors—they might be good judges of either business, and make money by it—how would that affect their position?'

'Unfavourably, I confess,' replied Benson. 'But we Gothamites have so thorough a respect for, and appreciation of, good wine and cigars, that the importation of them is considered particularly laudable.'

'Do you know, I was once confounded near going into this very business myself? I had a chance of being one of three partners who are making thirty thousand a year clear now among them, and their office is the nicest lounging place down town, where you hear all that is going on and a great deal more sometimes; and they hang out the best dry champagne in the country: Bleecker's isn't a circumstance to it. I missed a great chance then, but the fact was, it happened about five years ago, just about the time of my marriage, and I wanted to take Clara—or she me, rather—over to Paris,'

'Well,' said Ashburner, 'I don't mean to flatter, but it really seems to me that there is something not exactly very elevated in a state of society which leads a man of your education and accomplishments to regret that he wasn't a wine-merchant.'

Benson coloured up, hesitated a moment, and then, re-assuming his *nonchalant* air, returned to the charge.

'My dear fellow, you can't put yourself in my position, nor can I have your feelings on the subject—indeed I should be a great fool if I could. Your ancestors for such a time, that the memory of man runneth not to the contrary, have never done anything more approaching to business than making a book for the Derby, or overhauling their stewards' accounts. But who among us can go back to four generations of non-producers in his family? Take any of our set—myself as the nearest example—my grandfather, the governor's father that is, was one of the real 'lords of the land,'

a regular hard-fisted, straightforward—dirty, if you like—Dutch farmer, who sold his cabbages, and took them to market himself, for all that I remember. I *do* remember once, when a very small juvenile, helping his Irish labourer in the kitchen-garden for a whole summer morning, and the old fellow giving me a five-cent piece after our mid-day dinner, which I then thought something Californian. My mother's father used to sell pea-nuts—ground-nuts you call them, I believe,—I don't mean that he carried them round in a tin measure to the b'hoys at the Bowery Theatre, but he used to import them from the Mediterranean, or Africa, or somewhere. And finally he made a pretty tall fortune by it: but once he was near failing outright, because some of his cargoes came in late when he had a good many notes out. Think of the grandeur and destiny of a family depending on the arrival of five ship-loads of peanuts!'

'Fortune in a nut-shell,' said Ashburner.

'Why the deuce should we try to be above our origin, especially when every one knows it, or pretend to have any scruples about money-making? And that reminds me of how I served out the Robinsons once. Mrs. R. had been trying to poke fun at us, behind our backs of course, on the subject of cabbages and pea-nuts. Well, not long after she gave a big ball, and we, being punkins,* were of course among the invited. So I went to a clever working jeweller that I knew, and gave him an order to be filled up in all haste from a design of my own, ear-rings imitating pea-nuts in dead gold, and shirt buttons in green enamel, to be the counterfeit presentment of two cabbages; and Clara and I wore our ornaments at the ball (where they were much admired for

* A slang expression of young New-York for people of value and consequence.

their originality), and made a point of bringing them under Mrs. Robinson's notice.'

Any further discussion was stopped by their arriving at that dreary triangular square (*more hibernico loqui*) called the Park, where Benson's wagon awaited him—not the red-wheeled one; this vehicle was of a uniform dark green, furnished with a top (a desirable appendage when the thermometer stands 85° in the shade) and lined throughout with drab. The ponies were carefully enveloped to the very tips of their ears in white fly-nets. As the groom saw Benson approaching, he put himself and the top through a series of queer evolutions, which ended in the latter being lowered—a very necessary operation, to allow any one to get in with comfort; and after Benson and Ashburner were in, he put it up again with some ado, and then went his way, the concern only holding two. Then Benson turned the wagon round by backing and locking, and making it undergo a series of contortions as if he wanted to double it up into itself, and run over himself with his own wheels, and drove to the Fulton Ferry; for to arrive at the Centreville Course on Long Island—familiarly designated as *the* island—you first pass through Brooklyn, that trans-Hudsonian suburb of New-York, which thirty years ago was a miserable little village, and now contains upwards of ninety thousand inhabitants.

'And how did the ball go off?' asked Ashburner, as they rolled up the main avenue of Brooklyn, at the slowest possible trot, according to the well-known rule, always to take a fast horse easy over pavement. On board the ferry-boat there had not been much conversation, the horses being so worried by the flies as to require all Benson's attention.

'Oh, it was rather a *fiasco*, but we had some fun

Some predicted that the fashionables would come back. but they didn't, except a few of the young men; and all of 'our set' that were there threatened to go out of costume; but then we recollected that would have been a very Irish way of serving out Mr. Grabster, as by the established regulation in such cases, we should have had to pay double for tickets; so most of us took sailors' or firemen's dresses—the cheapest and commonest disguises we could get; and the ladies made some trivial addition to their ordinary ball-dresses—a wreath or a few extra flowers—and called themselves brides, or Floras, and so on. And some of the crack Bostonians blasphemed the expense, and went in plain clothes. So we had the consolation of making fun of all the outsiders, and their attempts at costume—such supernumeraries as most of them were! And none of the *comme-il-faut* people would serve on the committee, so Grabster had nobody to get up the room in proper style, and it looked like a 'Ripton' ball-room; and *The Sewer* reporters were there in all their glory. The Irishman had borrowed or stolen a uniform somewhere, and the Frenchman was appropriately arrayed in red, as a devil, and he went about taking notes of all the people's dresses, especially the ladies'; and as our ladies were not in costume, he thought he must have something to do with them, and so presented some of them with bouquets, which they wouldn't take, of course; and the young men trod on his toes and elbowed him off till he swore he would put them all in his paper. And we danced away, notwithstanding *The Sewer* and all its works. Tom Edwards was accoutred as Mose the fireman, and Sumner had an old French *débardeur* dress of his, just the thing for the occasion, only his shoes were too big; and after tripping up himself and his partner four times, he kicked them off clean

into the orchestra, and fearfully aggravated the fiddlers; but he took it as coolly as he does everything—put on a pair of ordinary boots, and was poking away again in five minutes. And we kept it up till two in the morning, polka chiefly, with a sprinkling of *deux-temps*, and then had a very bad supper, and some very bad wine, of Mr. Grabster's providing—genuine New Jersey champagne. How we looked after the dancing! Sumner's *débardeur* shirt might have been wrung out, it was so wet; and Mrs. Harrison—she had got herself up as Undine—was dripping enough for a half-a-dozen water-nymphs; and Miss Friskin had a shiny green silk dress; we had been polking together, and my white waistcoat, and pants, and cravat, were all stained green, as if I had been playing with a gigantic butterfly. And then after supper, when there was no one but our German cotillion set left, and just as we had put the chairs in order, the musicians struck work, and would not play any more (you know what an impracticable, conceited, obstinate brute a third-rate German musician is), saying that they were only bound to play just so long; so I gave them a good slanging in their own tongue (I know German enough to blow up a man, and a fine strong language it is for the purpose); and Bell swore it was too bad, and Edwards tried to make them a conciliatory speech—only he was too tipsy to talk straight; and Sumner offered them fifty dollars to go on playing. Thereupon up and spake the big bass-viol,—'We ton't want your money; we want to be dreated like chentlemens;' and then Frank lost his temper. 'I'll treat you,' says he; and with that he delivered right and left into the bass-viol, and knocked him through his own instrument; and then some one knocked Sumner over the head with a trombone;—then we all set to, and gave the musicians their change (we owed them a little before, for it wasn't the first time they

had been saucy to us), and we thrashed them essentially, and comminuted a few of their instruments. And half-a-dozen of the Irish waiters came out, with their sleeves rolled up, to fight for the honour of the house, and protect Mr. Grabster's property—meaning the musicians, I suppose;—and Haralson of Alabama, one of your regular six-feet-two-in-his-stockings South Western men, who had come North to learn the polka, and become civilized—Haralson pulled out a Bowie, and swore he would whittle them up if they didn't make themselves scarce. By Jove! you should have seen the Paddies scud! And I caught *The Sewer* reporter (the Irish one) in the *mêlée*, and let him have a kick that landed him in the middle of the floor, telling him he might put that into his next letter, and afterwards go to a place worse even than *The Sewer* office. Then, after all the enemy were fairly routed, we adjourned to my parlour. I had some good champagne of my own, and a *pâté* or two, and some Firmezas, and we held a jolley revel till four o'clock, and then the ladies retired, and we quiet married men did the same, and the boys went to fight the tiger, and Edwards lost 1400 dollars, and some of them took to running foot-races for a bet on the post-road. Haralson outran all the rest—and his senses too—and was found next evening about five miles up the road with no coat or hat, and one stocking off and the other stocking on, like my son John in the nursery rhyme, and his watch and purse gone. And *The Sewer* and *Inexpressible* said that it was the most brilliant ball that had occurred within the memory of the oldest inhabitant. And that's a pretty fair synopsis of the whole proceeding.'

By this ime they were off the pavement,—a change very sensible and desirable to man and horse, for an American pavement is something beyond imagination or

description, and must be experienced to be understood. The ponies, without waiting for the word, went off on their long steady stroke at three-quarters speed, and though the day was warm and the road heavy, stepped over the first three miles in twelve minutes, as Benson took care to show Ashburner by his watch. They challenged wagon after wagon, but no one seemed inclined to race at this stage of the proceedings, and they glided quietly by every thing. Only once was heard the sound of competing feet, when a black pacer swept up, with two tall wheels behind him, and a man mysteriously balanced between them. 'After the sulky is manners,' said Harry, slackening his speed, and giving the pacer a wide berth; and the man on the wheels whizzed by like a mammoth insect, and was soon lost to view amid a cloud of dust.

And now they arrived at a tavern where the owners of 'fast crabs' were wont to repose, to water their horses, and brandy-and-water themselves. The former operation is performed very sparingly, the supply of liquid afforded to the animals consisting merely of a spongeful passed through their mouths; the latter is usually conducted on more liberal principles. But, as our friends felt no immediate desire for liquor, Benson amused himself while the horses rested by putting down his top, for the sky had slightly clouded over,—a favourable circumstance, he remarked, for the trot. Just as he was starting his ponies, with a chirrup, a tandem developed itself from under the shed, and its driver greeted him with a friendly nod.

'Good afternoon, Mr. Losing,' quoth Harry, raising his whip-hand in answer to the salute; then, *sotto voce* to Ashburner, 'a Long-Island fancy man: lots of money, and no end of fast horses.'

Mr. Losing had a thin hatchety face, and a very yellow complexion, with hair and beard to match. He wore a yellow straw-hat, and a yellowish-grey summer paletot, with yellowish-brown linen trousers. His light gig (of the kind technically called a double-sulky) was painted a dingy yellow ochre; the horses were duns, the fly-nets drab, and what little harness there was, retained the original law-calf colour of its leather; in short, the whole concern had a general pervading air of dun, which but for the known wealth of its owner might have been suggestive of unpleasant Joe-Millerisms. The only exception was his companion, a gay horse-dealer and jockey, who acted as amateur groom on this occasion. Mr. Van Eyck had sufficient diversity of colour in his dress to relieve the monotony of a whole landscape,—blue coat and gilt buttons, lilac waistcoat and ditto, red cravat and red-striped check shirt, white hat and trousers. His apparel might have been a second-hand suit of Bird Simpson's. As the gig came out close at the wheels of the wagon, the two whips interchanged glances, as much as to say, 'Here's at you!' and 'Come on!' and Losing tightened his reins; then, as his leader ranged up alongside Benson's horses, the latter drew up his lines also, and the teams went off together.

A good team race is more exciting to both the lookers-on and the performers than any contest of single horses; there is twice as much noise, twice as much skill in driving, and apparently greater speed, though in reality less. Neither had started at the top of their gait, but they kept gradually and proportionably crowding the pace, till they were going about seventeen miles an hour, and at that rate they kept for the first half-mile exactly in the same relative position as they had started. No one spoke a word; the close contact of

horses in double harness excites them so, that they require checking, rather than encouragement; but Benson with a rein in his hand was feeling every inch of his ponies, and watching every inch of the road. Losing sat like a statue and his horses seemed to go of themselves. Then as the ground began to rise, Losing drew gradually ahead, or rather Benson's team came back to him; still it was inch by inch; in the next quarter the wheeler instead of the leader was alongside the other team, and that was all Losing had gained. Then Harry, with some management, got both reins into one hand, and lifted his nags a little with the whip. At the same time Losing altered his hold for the first time, and shook up his horses. There was a corresponding increase of speed in both parties, which kept them in the same respective position, and so they struggled on for a little while longer, till just before the road descended again Benson made another effort to regain his lost ground. In so doing, he imprudently loosened his hold too much, and his off horse went up.

The moment Firefly lost his feet Benson threw his whole weight upon the horses, and hauled them across the road, close in behind Losing's gig, the break having lost him just a length, so that when they struck into their trot again they were at the Long-Islander's wheel. Down the hill they went, faster than ever; the wagon could not gain an inch on the gig, or the gig shake the wagon off. But Losing had manifestly the best of it, as all his dust went into the face of Benson and Ashburner, enveloping and powdering them and their equipage completely. Their only consolation was, that they were bestowing a similar favour on every wagon that they passed. As both teams were footing their very best, Benson's only chance of getting by was in

case one of the tandem nags should happen to break, a chance which he kept ready to take advantage of. By and by the leader went up, but Losing, who had his horses under perfect command, let him run a little way, and caught him again into his trot without losing anything. Nevertheless Benson, who had seen the break, made a push to go by, and with a great shout crowded his team up to the wheeler, but there they broke,—this time both horses,—and before he could bring them down he was two lengths in the rear. Then Losing drew on one side, and slackened his speed, and Benson also pulled up almost to a walk.

'His double-sulky is lighter than my wagon,' said Harry, 'even without the top, and the top makes fifty pounds difference. My machine is built a little heavier than the average purposely, because it rides easier, and shakes the horses less when there are inequalities in the road, so that besides being pleasanter to go in, a team can take it along about as fast as anything lighter for a short brush, but when the horses are so nearly equal, and you have some miles to go on a heavy road, the extra weight tells. However, it is no disgrace to be beaten by Losing, anyway, for his horses are his study and *specialité*. Every fortnight the bolts and screws of his wagon are re-arranged; his collars fit like gloves; he has a particular kind of watering-pot made on purpose to water his horses' legs. Every trifle is rigorously attended to. You ought to visit his, or some other sporting man's stable here, just to note the difference between that sort of thing with us and with you. Instead of hunters and steeple-chasers, you will see five or six trotters together, that can all beat 2′ 50″.'

Ashburner began to have some dim recollection of hearing Losing's name before. Some one, probably Sed-

ley, had mentioned him as a person who considered women only made to be mothers of men, and men only made to be trainers of horses.

The road happened just then to be pretty clear, so they proceeded leisurely for some miles further, till just as they were quitting the turnpike for a lane which led to the course, the rattle of wheels and the shouts of drivers came up behind them. Benson, not disposed to swallow any more of other people's dust if he could help it, waked up his horses at once, and they clattered along the lane, up hill and down, and over a railroad track, and passed numerous wagons, at a faster rate than ever. '*Do* get out of the way!' shouted Henry to one primitive gentleman, with a very tired horse, who was occupying exactly the centre of the road. 'You go to ——.' The individual addressed was probably about to say something very bad, when Benson, who was a moral man, and had the strongest wheels, cut short any possible profanity for the moment by driving slap into him, and knocking him into the ditch, with the loss of a spoke or two. This collision hardly delayed their speed an instant; and though some of the pursuers were evidently gaining, no one overhauled them for three-quarters of a mile, at the end of which Starlight and Firefly swept proudly up to the course, with a long train in their rear.

All the vicinity of the Centreville Course—not the stables and sheds merely, but the lanes leading to it, the open ground about it, the whole adjacent country, one might almost say—was covered with wagons stowed together as closely as cattle in a market. If it had been raining wagons and trotters the night before just over the place, like the showers of frogs that country editors short of copy fill a column with, or if they had grown up there ready harnessed, there could not have

been a more plentiful supply. Wagons, wagons, wagons everywhere, of all weights, from a hundred and eighty pounds to four hundred, with here and there a sulky for variety,—horses of all styles, colours, and merits,—no sign of a servant or groom of any kind, but a number of boys, mostly blackies, about one to every ten horses, who earned a few shillings by looking after the animals, and watching the carpets, sheets, and fly-nets. The only other moveables, the long-handled and short-lashed whips, were invariably carried off by their proprietors. Whips and umbrellas are common property in America; they are an exception to the ordinary law of *meum* and *tuum*, and strictly subject to socialist rules. Wo to the owner of either who lets his property go one second out of his sight!

'Now then, Snowball!' quoth Benson, as a young gentleman of colour rushed up on the full grin, stimulated to extra activity by the recollection of past and the prospective 'quarters,'—'take care of the fliers, and don't let any one steal their tails! I ought to tell you,' he continued to Ashburner, leading the way towards the big, dilapidated,* unpainted, barn-like structure, which appeared to be the rear of the grand stand, 'you won't find any gentlemen here,—that is, not above half-a-dozen at most.'

'I was just wondering whether we should see any ladies.'

Benson pointed over his left shoulder; and they planked their dollar apiece at the entrance.

Ashburner's first impression, when fairly inside, was that he had never seen such a collection of disreputable

* A very critical friend wants to know if the term *dilapidated* can, with strict propriety, be applied to a *wooden* building.

looking characters in broad daylight, and under the open sky. All up the rough broad steps, that were used indifferently to sit or stand upon; all around the oyster and liquor stands, that filled the recess under the steps; all over the ground between the stand and the track, was a throng of low, shabby, dirty men, different in their ages, sizes, and professions; for some were farmers, some country tavern-keepers, some city ditto, some horse-dealers, some gamblers, and some loafers in general; but alike in their slang and 'rowdy' aspect. There is something peculiarly disagreeable in an American crowd, from the fact that no class has any distinctive dress. The gentleman and the workingman, or the 'loafer,' wear clothes of the same kind, only in one case they are new and clean, in the other, old and dirty. The ragged dress-coats, and crownless beavers of the Irish peasants have long been the admiration of travellers; now, elevate these second-hand garments a stage or two in the scale of preservation—let the coats be not ragged, but shabby, worn in seam, and greasy in collar; the hats whole, but napless at edge, and bent in brim; supply them with old trousers of the last fashion but six, and you have the general costume of a crowd like the present. But ordinary collections of the οἱ πολλοὶ are relieved by the very superior appearance of the women: pretty in their youth, ladylike and stylish even when prematurely faded, always dressed respectably, and frequently dressed in good taste, they form a startling relief and contrast to their cavaliers; and not only the stranger, but the native gentleman, is continually surprised at the difference, and says to himself, 'Where in the world could such nice women pick up those snobs?' Here, where there is not a woman within a mile (unless that suspicious carriage in the corner contains some gay friends of Tom Edwards'), the

congregated male loaferism of these people, without even a decent-looking dog among them, is enough to make a man button his pockets instinctively.

Amid this wilderness of vagabonds may be seen grouped together at the farther corner of the stand, the representatives of the gentlemanly interest, numbering, as Benson had predicted, about half a-dozen. Losing, with his yellow blouse and moustache to match; Tom Edwards, in a white hat and trousers, and black velvet coat; Harrison, slovenly in his attire, and looking almost as coarse as any of the rowdies about, till he raises his head, and shows his intelligent eyes; Bleecker, who has just arrived; and a few specimens of Young New-York like him. Benson carries his friend that way, and introduces him in due form to the Long Islander, who receives him with an elaborate bow. Ashburner offers a segar to Losing, who accepts the weed with a nod of acknowledgment (for he rarely opens his mouth except to put something into it, or to make a bet), and offers one of his in return, which Ashburner trying, excoriates his lips at the first whiff, and is obliged to throw it away after the third, for Charlie Losing has strong tastes, will rather drink brandy than wine, any day, and smokes tobacco that would knock an ordinary man down.

The stranger glances his eye over the scene of action: A barouche and four does not differ more from a trotting wagon, or a blood courser from a Canadian pacer, than an English race-course from an American 'track.' It is an ellipse of hard ground, like a good and smooth piece of road, with some variations of ascent and descent. The distance round is calculated at a mile, according to the scope of turning requisite for a horse before a sulky —that being the most usual form of trotting; for a saddle

horse that has the pole,* it comes practically to a little less; for a harness horse (especially if to a wagon) with an outside place, to a little, or sometimes a good deal more. Around the enclosure, within the track (which looks as if it were trying hard to grow grass, and couldn't), a few wagons, which obtained entrance by special favour, are walking about; they belong to the few men who have brought their grooms with them. Harrison's pet trotter is there, a magnificent long-tailed bay, as big as a carriage-horse, equal to 2′ 50″ on the road before that wagon, and worth 1500 dollars, it is said. Just inside the track, and opposite the main stand outside, is a little shanty of a judge's stand, and marshalled in front of it, are half-a-dozen notorious pugilists, and similar characters, who, doubtless on the good old principle of 'set a thief,' &c., are enrolled for the occasion as special constables, with very special and formidable white bludgeons to keep order, and precise suits of black cloth to augment their dignity.

'To come off at three o'clock,' said the hand-bills. It is now thirty-five minutes past three, and no signs of beginning. An American horse and an American woman always keep you waiting an hour at least. One of the judges comes forward, and raps on the front of the stand with a primitive bit of wood resembling a broken boot-jack. 'Bring out your horses!' People look towards the yard on the left. Here is one of them just led out; they pull off his sheets, his driver climbs into the little seat behind him. He comes down past the

* A horse 'will go to the pole' in such a time, means that he will go in double harness. A horse 'has the pole,' means that he has drawn the place nearest the inside boundary-fence of the track.

stand at a moderate gait. 'Hurrah for old Twenty-miles-an-hour! Trustee!'

The old chestnut is half-blood; but you would never guess it from his personal appearance, so chunky, and thick-limbed, and sober-looking is he. His action is uneven, and seemingly laborious; you would not think him capable of covering *one* mile in three minutes, much less of performing twenty at the same rate. No wonder he hobbles a little behind, for his back sinews are swelled, and his legs scarred and disfigured—the traces of injuries received in his youth, when a cart ran into him and cut him almost to pieces. Veterinary surgeons, who delight in such relics, will show you pieces of sinew taken from him after the accident. That was six or seven years ago: since then he has solved a problem for the trotting world.

'There,' says Benson, with a little touch of triumph, 'is the only horse in the world that ever trotted twenty miles in an hour. I saw it done myself. He was driven nearly two miles before he started, to warm him up, and make him limber. When the word was given, he made a skip, and though his driver (not the same that he has now) caught him before he was fairly off his feet, he was more than three minutes doing the first mile, which looked well for the backers of time; but as the old fellow went on, he did every mile better than the preceding, and the last in the best time of all, winning with nearly half a minute to spare.

'Has the experiment been often tried?'

'Not more than two or three times, I believe; and the horses who attempted it broke down in the eighteenth or nineteenth mile. Nevertheless, I think that within the last twelve years, we have had two or three horses besides Trustee who could have accomplished the feat; but as such a

horse is worth 2000 dollars, or upwards, a heavy bet would be required to tempt a man to risk killing or ruining his animal; and our sporting men, though they bet frequently, are not in the habit of betting largely. That is one reason why it has not been tried oftener; and I am inclined to think that there is another and a better motive. The owner of a splendid horse does not like to risk his life; and it is a risk of life to attempt to trot him twenty miles an hour.'

Pit, pat! pit, pat! The old mare is coming down to the score. A very ordinary looking animal in repose, the magnificence of her action converts her into a beauty when moving. How evenly her feet rise and fall, regularly as a machine, though she is nearly at the top of her speed! She carries her head down, and her neck stretched out, and from the tip of her nose to the end of her long white tail, that streams out in the breeze made by her own progress, you might draw a straight line, so true and right forward does she travel. Perched over her tail, between those two tall, slender wheels, sits her owner, David Bryan, the only man that ever handles her, in something like a jockey costume, blue velvet jacket and cap to match, and his white hair, whiter than his horse's tail, streaming in the wind—a respectable and almost venerable looking man; but a hard boy for all that, say the knowing ones. Great applause from the Long-Island men, who swear by 'the Lady,' and are always ready to 'stake their pile' on her, for her owner is a Long-Islander, and she is a Suffolk county, Long-Island mare. Some eight years ago Lady Suffolk was bought out of a baker's cart for 112 dollars: and since then she has won for 'Dave' upwards of 30,000 dollars. This is what the possessor of a fast trotter most prides himself on—to have bought the animal for a song on the strength of his own

eye for his points, and then developed him into a 'flier.' When a colt is bred from a trotting stallion, put into training at three or four years old, and sold the first time for a high price, if he turns out well there is no particular wonder or merit in it; if he does not, the disappointment is extreme.

Ah, here comes Pelham at last—a clean little bay, stepping roundly, and lifting his legs well: you might call it a perfect action, if we had not just seen Lady Suffolk go by—but *so* wicked about the head and eyes! Behind the little horse sits a big Irishman, in his shirt sleeves; and they are hauling away at each other, pull Pat, pull Pelham, as if the man wanted to jerk the horse's head off, and the horse to draw the man's arm out. You see the driver is holding by little loops fastened to the reins, to prevent his grasp from slipping. Pelham is a young horse for a trotter, say seven years old, and has already done the fastest mile ever made in harness; but his temper is terribly uncertain, and to-day he seems to be in a particularly bad humour.

Trustee, who requires much warming up, goes all round the track, increasing his speed as he goes, till he has reached pretty nearly his limit. Pelham also completes the circuit, but more leisurely. The Lady trots about a quarter of a mile, then walks a little, and then brushes back. Her returning is even faster and prettier than her going. '2′ 33″,' says Losing, speaking for the first time, as she crosses the score (the line in front of the judge's stand). His eye is such that, given the horse and the track, he can tell the pace at a glance within half a second.

The gentry about are beginning to bet on their respective favourites, and some upon time—trifling amounts generally—five, ten, or twenty dollars; and

there is much pulling out, and counting, and depositing of greasy notes. Bang! goes the broken boot-jack again. This time it is not 'Bring *out* your horses!' but 'Bring *up* your horses!'—a requisition which the drivers comply with by turning *away* from the stand. This is to get a start, a *flying start* being the rule, which obviously favours the backers of time, and is, in some respects, fairer to the horses, but is very apt to create confusion and delay, especially when three or four horses are entered. So it happens in the present instance; half way up the quarter, the horses turn, not altogether, but just as they happen to be; and off they go, some slower and some faster, trying to fall into line as they approach the score. 'Come back!' It's no go this time; Pelham has broken up, and is spreading himself all over the track. Trustee, too, is a length or more behind the gray mare, and evidently in no hurry. They all go back, the mare last, as she was half way down the other quarter before the recall was understood.

'What a beauty she is!' says Harry. 'And she has the pole, too.'

'Will you bet two to three on her against the field?' asks Edwards, who knew very well that Trustee is the favourite. Benson declines. 'Then you will go on time? Will you bet on 7′ 42″, or that they don't beat 7′ 47″?' (three-mile heats, you will recollect, reader). No, Harry won't bet at all; so Edwards turns to Losing. 'Will you bet three to five in hundreds on the Lady?' Losing will. They neither plank the money, nor book the bet, but the thing is understood.

Pelham's driver has begged the judges to give the word, even if he is two lengths behind; he would rather do that than have his horse worried by false starts. So this time, perhaps, they will get off. Not yet! Bryan's

mare breaks up just before they come to the score. Harrison hints that he broke her on purpose, because Trustee was likely to have about a neck advantage of him in the start. 'Of course they never go the first time,' says Benson, 'and very seldom start the second.'

'I saw nine false starts once, at Harlem,' says Bleecker, 'where there were but three horses. Better luck next time.'

It is better luck. Pelham lays in the rear full two lengths, but Trustee and the mare come up nose and nose to the score, going at a great pace. 'Go!' At the word Trustee breaks. 'Bah! Take him away! Where's Bridges?' The superior skill of his former driver is painfully remembered by the horse's friends. But he soon recovers, and catches his trot about two lengths behind the mare, and as much in advance of Pelham; for the little bay is going very badly, seems to have no trot in him, and his driver dares not hurry him. In these respective positions they complete the first quarter.

As they approach the half mile, the distance renders their movements indistinct, and their speed, positive or relative, difficult to determine. You can only make out their position. Pelham continues to lose, and Trustee has gained a little; but the gray mare keeps the lead gallantly.

'I like a trot,' says Benson, 'because you can watch the horses so long. In a race they go by like a flash, once and again, and it's all over.'

In the next quarter they are almost lost to view, and then they appear again coming home, and you begin once more to appreciate the rate at which they are coming. Still it is not the very best pace; the Lady is taking it

rather easy, as if conscious of having it all her own way; and her driver looks as careless and comfortable as if he were only taking her out to exercise, when she glides past the stand.

'2′ 35″,' says Losing. He doesn't need to look at his watch; but there is great comparing of stop-watches among the other men for the time of the first mile. Hardly half a length behind is Trustee; he has been gradually creeping up without any signs of being hurried, and clumsily as he goes, gets over the ground without heating himself.

'John Case knows what he's about after all,' Edwards observes. 'He takes his time, and so does the old horse; wait another round, and, at the third mile, they'll be *there*.'

But where's Pelham? Is he lost? No, there he comes; and, Castor and Pollux, what a burst! Something has waked him up after the other horses have passed the stand, and while he is yet four or five lengths from it. There's a brush for you! Did you ever see a horse foot it so?—as if all the ideas of running that he may ever have had in his life were arrested, and fastened down into his trot. How he is closing up the gap! If he can hold to that stroke he will be ahead of the field before the first quarter of this second mile is out. A mighty clamour arises, shouts from his enemies, who want to break him, cheers from his injudicious friends. There, he has lapped Trustee—he has passed him; tearing at the bit harder than ever, he closes with Lady Suffolk. Ryan does not begin to thrash his mare yet, he only shows the whip over her; but he yells like a madman at her, and at Pelham, whose driver holds on to him as a drowning man holds on to a rope. They are going side by side at a terrific pace. It can't last; one

of them must go up. The bay horse does go up just at the quarter pole, having made that quarter, Benson says, in the remarkably short time of thirty-six seconds and a half.

Pelham's driver can't jerk him across the track; by doing so he would foul Trustee, who is just behind; so he has to let the chestnut go by, and then sets himself to work to bring down his unruly animal; no easy matter—for Pelham, frightened by the shouting, and excited by the noise of the wheels, plunges about in a manner that threatens to spill or break down the sulky; and twice, after being brought almost to a full stop, goes off again on a canter. Good bye, little horse! there's no more chance for you. By this time, the Lady is nearly a quarter of a mile ahead, and going faster than ever. Somehow or other, Trustee has increased his speed, too, and is just where he was, a short half-length behind her. The way in which he hangs on to the mare begins to frighten the Long-Islanders a little, but they comfort themselves with the hope that she has something left, and can let out some spare foot in the third mile, or whenever it may be necessary.

Some forty seconds more elapse: a period of time that goes like a flash when you are training your own flier, or 'brushing' on the road, but seems long enough when you are waiting for horses to come round, and then they appear once more coming home. The mare is still leading, with her beautiful, steady, unfaltering stroke; but she is by no means so fresh-looking as when she started; many a dark line of sweat marks her white hide. Close behind her comes Trustee; the half-length gap has disappeared, and his nose is ready to touch Bryan's jacket. There is hardly a wet hair discernible on him; he goes perfectly at his ease, and seems to be in hand.

'He has her now,' is the general exclamation, 'and can pass her when he pleases.' As the mare crosses the score (in 2′ 34″, according to Edwards' stop-watch), Bryan 'looks over his left shoulder,' like the knights in old ballads, and becomes aware for the first time that the horse at his wheel is not Pelham, as he had supposed, but Trustee.

The old fellow is another man. His air of careless security has changed to one of intense excitement. Slash! slash! slash! falls the long whip, with half-a-dozen frantic cuts and an appropriate garnish of yells. Almost any other trotter would go off in a run at one such salute, to say nothing of five or six; but the old mare, who 'has no break in her,' merely understands them as gentle intimations to go faster—and she does go faster. How her legs double up, and what a rush she has made! There is a gap of three lengths between her and Trustee. He never hurries himself, but goes on steadily as ever. See, as he passes, how he straddles behind like an old cow, and yet how dexterously he paddles himself along, as it were with one hind foot. What a mixture of ugliness and efficiency his action is! At the first quarter the Lady has come back to him. Three times during this, the last and decisive mile, is the performance repeated. You may hear Bryan's voice and whip completely across the course, as he hurries his mare away from the pursuer; but each succeeding time the temporary gap is shorter and sooner closed.

Now they are coming down the straight stretch home. The mare leads yet. Case appears to be talking to his horse, and encouraging him; if it is so, you cannot hear him, for the tremendous row Lady Suffolk's driver is making. She had the pole at starting, has kept it throughout, and Trustee must pass her on the outside.

This circumstance is her only hope of winning. All her owner's exertions, and all the encouraging shouts of her friends, which she now hears greeting her from the stand, cannot enable her to shake off Trustee an inch, but if she can only maintain her lead for six or seven lengths more, it is enough. The chestnut is directly in her rear; every blow gets a little more out of her.—Half the short interval to the goal is passed, when Trustee diverges from his straight course, and shows his head alongside Bryan's wheel. Catching his horse short, Case puts whip upon him for the first time, shakes him up with a great shout, and crowds him past the mare, winning the heat by a length.

The little bay was so far behind at the end of the second mile, that no one took any notice of him, and he was supposed to have dropped out somewhere on the road. His position, however, improved sensibly on the third mile; still, as there was a strong probability of his being shut out, the judges despatched one of their number to the distance-post with a flag; a very proper proceeding, only they thought of it rather late, for the judge arrived there only just before Pelham, and also just before Trustee crossed the score; in fact, the three events were all but simultaneous; the judge dropped the flag in Pelham's face, and Pelham in return nearly ran over the judge. This episode attracted no attention at the time of its occurrence, all eyes being directed to the leading horses; but now it affords materials for a nice little row, Pelham's driver protesting violently against the distance. There is much thronging, and vociferating, and swearing about the judge's stand, into which one burly Irishman endeavours to force his way. One of the specials favours him with a rap on the head, that would astonish a hippopotamus. Pat doesn't seem to mind it,

but he understands it well enough (the argument is just suited to his capacity), and remains tolerably quiet. Finally, it is proclaimed that 'Trustee wins the heat in 7′ 45″, and Pelham distanced.'

'Best three miles ever made in harness,' says Harrison, 'except when Dutchman did it in 7′ 41″.'

Edwards doubts the fact, and they bet about it, and will write to the *Spirit of the Times* (the American *Bell's Life*).

Ashburner and Benson descended from the stand. The horses, panting and pouring with sweat, are rubbed and scraped by their attendants, three or four to each. Then they are clothed, and walked up and down quietly. They have a rest of nominally half-an-hour, and practically at least forty minutes. Some of the crowd are eating oysters, more drinking brandy-and-water, and a still greater number 'loafing' about without any particular employment. There are two or three thimble-riggers on the ground, but they seem to be in a barren country: nobody there is green enough for them; the very small boys take sights at them. There is a tradition that Edwards once in his younger days tried his fortune with them. He looked so dandified, green, and innocent, that they let him win five dollars the first time, and then, on the riggers proposing to bet a hundred, his supposed victim applied the finger of scorn to the nose of derision, and strutted off with his V.,* to the great amusement of the bystanders. Tom is very proud of this story, and likes to tell it himself. That, and his paying a French actress with a check when he had nothing at his banker's, are two of the great exploits of his life.

'This *is* rather a low assemblage certainly,' says Ash-

* A five-dollar bill is so called from the designation in Roman numerals upon it.

burner, after he had contemplated it from several points of view, and observed a great many different points of character. 'Do they ever have races here?'

'Yes, every spring and fall, here or on the Union Course adjoining. They are rather more decently attended, but not over respectable, much less fashionable. At the South it is different; the ladies go, and the club races are some of the most marked features of their city life. I recollect when I was a boy, that these trotting matches were nice things, and gentlemen used to enter their own horses; but gradually they have gone down hill to what they are now, and the names of the best trotters are associated with the hardest characters and the most disreputable species of balls.'

'And when they race, do the horses run on ground like *this?*' asked Ashburner, stamping on the track, which was as hard as Macadam.

'Precisely on this, and run four-mile heats, too, and five of them sometimes.'

'*Five* four-mile heats on ground like this?' The Englishman looked incredulous.

'Exactly. It has happened that each of three has won a heat, and then there was one dead heat. You will remember, though, that we run old horses, not colts. there is no extra weight for age; they begin at four or five years old, and go on till twelve or fourteen.'

'But they must be very liable to accidents, going on such hard soil.'

'Yes, they do break their legs sometimes, but not often. Our horses are tougher than yours.'

As they stroll about, Benson points out several celebrated fliers that have gained admission inside of the stand, but prefer remaining outside of the track; some pretty well worn out and *emeriti*, like Ripton, an old

rival of Lady Suffolk (the mare has outlasted most of her early contemporaries), some in their prime, like the trotting stallion, Black Hawk, beautifully formed as any blood-horse, but singularly marked, being white stocking-ed all round to the knee. 'There,' says Harry, 'is a fellow that belies the old horse dealer's rhyme,

> 'Four white legs *and* a white nose,
> Take him away, and throw him to the crows.'

Time is up, and they return to the stand. Edwards is bantering Losing, and asks him if he will repeat his bet on this heat. He will fast enough, and double it on the final result. Edwards wants nothing better.

This time, for a wonder, the horses get off at the first start, and a tremendous pace they make, altogether too much for Trustee, who is carried off his feet in the first half-quarter, and the Lady goes ahead three, four, five lengths, and has taken the pole before he can recover. Bryan continues to crowd the pace. The mare comes round to the score in 2′ 33″, leading by four lengths, and her driver threshing her already. 'She can't stand it,' says the knowing ones; 'she must drop out soon.' But she doesn't drop out in the second mile, at least, for at the end of that she is still three lengths in advance, and Trustee does not appear so fresh as he did last heat. The Long-Islanders are exultant, and the sporting men look shy. When they come home in the last quarter, the chestnut has only taken one length out of the gap; nevertheless, he goes for the outside, and makes the best rush he can. It's no use. He can't get near her; breaks up again, and crosses the score a long way behind. Much manifestation of boisterous joy among the farmers. Edwards looks sold, and something like a smile passes over Losing's unimpassioned countenance. It is plain sailing

for the judges this time. 'Lady Suffolk has the heat in 7′ 49″;' and there is no mistake or dispute about it.

Another long pause. Eight minutes' sport and three quarters of an hour intermission among such a company begins to be rather dull work. All the topics of interest afforded by the place have been exhausted. Harrison and Benson begin to talk stocks and investments; the juveniles are comparing their watering-place experiences during the summer. Ashburner says nothing, and smokes an indefinite number of cigars; Losing says rather less, and smokes more. Edwards has disappeared; gone, possibly, to talk to the doubtful carriages. It is growing dark before they are ready for the third and decisive heat.

One false start, and at the second trial they are off. The mare has the inside, in right of having won the preceding heat. She crowds the pace from the start as usual; but Trustee is better handled this time, and does not break. Case allows the Lady to lead him by three lengths, and keeps his horse at a steady gait, in quiet pursuit of her. For two miles their positions are unaltered; Bryan's friends cheer him vociferously every time as he comes round; he replies by a flourish of his long whip and additional shouts to his mare. In the third mile, Trustee begins to creep up, and in the third quarter of it, just before he gets out of sight from the stand, is only a length and a half behind. When they appear again, there are plenty of anxious lookers-out; and men like our friend Edwards, who have a thousand or more at stake on the result, cannot altogether restrain their emotions. Here they come close enough together! Trustee has lapped the mare on the outside; his head is opposite the front rim of her wheel. Bryan shouts and whips like one possessed; Case's small voice is also

lifted up to encourage Trustee. The chestnut is gaining, but only inch by inch, and they are nearly home. Now Case has lifted him with the whip, and he makes a rush and is at her shoulder. Now he will have her. Oh, dear, he has gone up! Hurrah for the old gray! Stay; Case has caught him beautifully; he is on his trot again opposite her wheel. One desperate effort on the part of man and horse; and Trustee shoots by the mare; but not till after she has crossed the score. Lady Suffolk is quite done up; she could not go another quarter; but she has held out long enough to win the heat and the money.

And now, as it was somewhere in the neighbourhood of seven, and neither Ashburner nor Benson had eaten anything since eight in the morning, they began to feel very much inclined for dinner, or supper, or something of the sort; and the team travelled back quite as fast as it was safe to go by twilight; a little faster, the Englishman might have thought, if he had not been so hungry. Then after crossing the Brooklyn ferry, Benson announced his intention of putting up his horses for the night at a livery stable, and himself at Ashburner's hotel, as it was still a long drive at that time of night to Devilshoof; which being agreed upon, they next dived into an oyster cellar, of which there are about two to a block all along Broadway, and ordered an unlimited supply of the agreeable shell-fish, broiled,—*oyster chops*, Ashburner used to call them; and the term gives a stranger a pretty good idea of what these large oysters look like, cooked as they are with crumbs, exactly in the style of a *cotelette panée*. And they make very nice eating, too; only they promote thirst and induce the consumption of numerous glasses of champagne, or brandy-and-water, as the case may be. Whether this be

an objection to them or not, is matter of opinion. Then having adjourned to Ashburner's apartment in the fifth story of the Manhattan Hotel (it was a room with an alcove, French fashion), and smoked numerous Firmezas there, the Englishman turned in for the night; and Benson, who had no notion of paying for a bed when he could get a sofa for nothing, disposed himself at full length upon Ashburner's without taking off anything except his hat, and was fast asleep in less time than it would take *The Stover* to tell a lie.

CHAPTER X.

A COUNTRY GENTLEMAN AT HOME.

IT was a lovely October day; the temperature perfectly Elysian,—not half a degree too hot or too cold,—and the air moister than is usual in the dry climate of the Northern States, altogether reminding one of Florence in early autumn, only less enervating. Ashburner and Harry Benson were gliding up the Hudson in a 'floating palace,' which is American penny-a-liner for a north-river steamboat. Gerard Ludlow was on board, handsome and *distingué* as ever, but a little thinned and worn by numberless polkas. He had got rid of his wife by a mighty effort, and was going to play *le Maria à la Champagne*,—not at Ravenswood, however, but with some of the Van Hornes, who lived higher up the river. While the young exquisite was rattling on in a sort of Macaronic French to Mrs. Benson about the mountains of Switzerland and the pictures of Italy, the ascent of the Nile and 'that glorious *Clos Vougeot Blanc-Mousseux* at the *Anglais*,'—every topic, in short, that had not the least connection with America,—Ashburner was viewing for the third time, with unabated admiration, the magnificent scenery of the classic American river,—for classic it is to a New-Yorker since Washington Irving has immortalized its legends.

'I am glad to see you are not ashamed to show a little enthusiasm,' said Benson, as he marked his friend

leaning over the forward railing, absorbed in the view before him. 'Some people don't care much for this sort of thing. There's my cousin Ludlow, how supremely indifferent he is to it all! He is talking to my wife about the last comic opera he saw in Paris, which represents Shakspeare and Queen Bess getting very jolly together.'

'Certainly one would hardly be able to tell what countryman Ludlow was, without previous knowledge. He seems, like many of your fashionables, very much out of place here.'

'That's true enough; and the man most out of place among them all is my brother Carl, whom we are just going to visit.'

Ashburner's recollection and knowledge of Carl Benson were pretty much comprised in a certain luncheon at Ravenswood, which he had found very much in place, and a very good place for. Henry went on to explain himself.

'He prides himself on a regard for two things—sincerity and equity—two very estimable virtues, no doubt, but capable of being ridden to death like all hobbies.'

Benson further proceeded to state that he was afraid they would find his brother in no very genial mood,—that, in fact, he had two special reasons at that time for being in bad humour. The anti-rent epidemic had broken out in the vicinity, and his place was threatened with perforation by a railroad. The former, however perilous to some of his acquaintances, was no very terrible danger to Carl himself, he having as many tenants in the country as his brother had in town—to wit, just one. The latter was considerably more serious in itself, and rendered particularly aggravating by attendant circumstan-

ces. An equally convenient and much safer inland route for the railway had been originally proposed; but Mr. Jobson, the chief engineer, started the project of a new one close along the shore, running through the beautiful private grounds that lined the whole east bank of the river for a hundred and fifty miles. The true motive for this change was, that the company would thus have to pay less for right of way, since the inland route would have passed through the corn-fields and vegetable-grounds of farmers, to whom they must have made full compensation at the market value of the land, whereas by cutting through a private lawn, they could take the ground at a merely nominal rate, the damage caused to a gentleman by the destruction of his place for all the purposes of a country seat being a 'fancy value,' which jurors and commissioners chosen from the mass of the people, and regarding the aristocratic landholder with an envious eye, would never pay the least attention to. But, either from a lingering regard for outward decency, or from some other motive, this, the real reason, met with only a passing allusion in Mr. Jobson's report. He came out boldly, and recommended the river route as calculated to improve the appearance of the shore, by filling up bays and cutting off sharp points.* What made it worse was, that the majority of those very gentlemen proprietors had been induced to subscribe largely to the road under the solemn assurance from leading members of the company (which took care not to make itself officially and corporately responsible) that the inland route would be adopted, which assurance was thrown to the winds as soon as the books were closed up.

* A literal fact. Washington Irving's residence was among those disfigured by this operation, which made havoc of all the oldest and most beautiful properties in the State.

Carl was not to be taken in so; he had refused to subscribe to the road, and opposed it to the extent of his small influence from the first; he might be the victim of such people, but he would not be their dupe. This was one consolation to him. Another was, that the railway, when it did come upon him, which would not be for two years yet, would not absolutely ruin his place. It would not go through his house, nor across the lawn in front of it, or break down his terrace, for which Nature was to be thanked, and not Mr. Jobson. Ravenswood was partly within one of the to-be-improved bays, and consequently, the rails would cut it close along the water and under the terraced bank. It merely stopped his access to the river, which, as he did not yacht, and had room for the little boating he wanted in the adjoining bay, was no great deprivation. At any rate, the danger anticipated by Harry turned out all moonshine. When they stopped at Van Burenopolis (the landing nearest Ravenswood), Carl's rockaway was on the ground, and in ten minutes their host received them at his front door, both his hands outstretched, and his face lighted up with unfeigned pleasure.

Carl Benson was an unflattered likeness of his brother, with a larger nose, large feet, that got into every one's way, coarser hair, and narrower chest; altogether a rougher and inferior type of form; but he had a fresh and ruddy complexion, and though he was Henry's senior by six years, there did not seem to be more than a twelvemonth between them. In dress he was as quiet as Harry was gay; never cared how old his clothes were, so long as he had plenty of clean linen; was often two years behind the fashion; affected black coats and gray trousers; eschewed enamelled chains, jewelled waistcoat-buttons, and other similar fopperies of Young New-

York; preferred shoes (not of patent leather) to boots, and usually tied his cravat in the smallest possible bow. Nor was the contrast in manner between the two brothers less marked; the elder was shy and retiring before strangers, and would have been called a very awkward man anywhere but in England. You might easily guess from his way of behaving himself on a first introduction, the uncertain style of his movements, and his 'butter finger' fashion of taking hold of things, that he had none of that dexterity in the little every-day occasions of life which distinguished Harry; who, for instance, could harness a horse about as soon, as his groom, while Carl would have been half the day about it, and not have done it well after all. Harry could carry out a complicated affair of business at one interview, without coming off worst; but his elder brother would have pottered about it three days, and probably been cheated in the end. In fact Harry, though the junior, worked most of the financial and legal arrangements of the family, which fact, combined with the way he had of making Carl a stalking-horse for his stories, had more than once caused Carl to be regarded as a purely mythical personage.—This inaptitude for small business, this want of promptitude and dexterity, of presence of mind and body, so to speak, is not very detrimental in Europe, where a gentleman with a tolerably well-filled purse can have so much done for him; but in America, where the richest man has to do so much for himself, it is a constantly recurring inconvenience, and it struck the Englishman almost immediately, that this, though not especially alluded to by Henry, was one of the things that made Carl out of place in his own fatherland.

The mansion at Ravenswood, which had braved the storms of eighty-five winters (a venerable age for an

American house), was pitched on a hill commanding a view of the Hudson for forty miles. Without, it was built of rough stone, with an ample wooden *stoop* running all round it, and a great variety of vines and creepers running round all the pillars of the stoop;—within, it branched off into large halls and spacious rooms filled with antediluvian furniture, and guiltless of the ambitious upholstery attempts of Young New-York, which in such matters goes ahead of Paris itself. The library alone, in which Carl lived,—that is to say, he did everything but dining and sleeping there,—was fitted up in modern style, furnished with luxurious arm-chairs and sofas, the walls and ceiling neatly painted in oak, and the principal window composed of one oval pane of glass set in a frame, to which the external landscape supplied an exquisite picture. The hill swept down to the water's edge almost, where it terminated abruptly in a lofty terrace, ninety feet above the level of the shore. The woodlands all about—on Benson's place, on the places adjoining, on the opposite bank—would have been beautiful at any time of the year; now, when the foliage was changing colour, in anticipation of the coming frost, they were surpassingly so. As the trees change not all at once, but different ones assume different tints successively, the natural kaleidoscope is varied from day to day. The sumach leaf is one of the first to alter; it becomes a vivid scarlet; then the maple assumes a brilliant red and gold; then others put on a rich sienna, and others a warm olive. Here and there were interspersed patches of evergreens, pines looking almost blue, and cedars looking quite black from the contrast of the gorgeous and fiery colouring that surrounded them. The river water was deep blue; in the little bay north of Ravenswood it shaded off into a soft olive from the reflection of

the foliage and grass about it; while beyond the further bank of the Hudson rose the Kaatskill* chain, richly wooded to their summits, and painted with the myriad dyes of autumn,—a fitting background to the landscape. Of course the finest part of this view was beyond the limits of Ravenswood, but so much of it as belonged to Carl (and his grounds covered some two hundred acres) was cleverly disposed with the help of an ingenious landscape-gardener; the trees were cut into picturesque clumps and vistas, opened at the desirable points. Henry, who bragged for all the family as well as for himself, took care to inform Ashburner how, when the place came into Carl's possession (or rather into his wife's, for by the laws of New-York, the wife's property is absolutely hers, and out of her husband's control) by the demise of his father-in-law, there was hardly a carriage road on it, and how he had devoted all his spare income to it for seven years, 'and made it what you see.'

As the Englishman had nothing to do for some days but to ramble about Ravenswood, and talk to the owner of it, he had full opportunity of ascertaining how far his brother's estimate of him was correct, and also how far the difference between the two, particularly in their practical aptitude for business, was attributable to the fact, that one of them had finished his education in England, and the other in America, which, for a New-Yorker, means in Paris, in Germany, half over the continent of Europe, in short. His conclusion was, that some of the qualities which made his host so 'out of place' were natural, and that others had been superinduced upon these by his English education.

Harry Benson had truly stated, that his brother's

* Commonly written *Catskill*; but I believe the above is the genuine Dutch orthography.

prominent trait of character was sincerity. He used to say of himself, that the fairy had bestowed on him true Thomas's gift, 'the tongue that ne'er cou ldlie,' and that the consequent incapacities predicted by the Scottish minstrel had fallen upon him; he could neither buy nor sell, nor pay court to prince or peer (that is, in America, to the sovereign people), nor win favour of fair lady. Certainly this is a dangerous quality in any country, unless tempered with an exquisite tact, which was not among Carl's possessions; but it is peculiarly dangerous in America, for there is no public (not excepting the French or Irish) that feeds so greedily on pure humbug as the American. *Populus vult decipi* there with a vengeance; and when the general current of feeling has set towards any show or phantasm, moral, political, literary, or social, woe to the individual that plants himself in its way.

Equally correct was the assertion that equity was a leading idea of his mind. 'Give the devil his due,' was one of his favourite proverbs; and when he said that a thing 'was not fair,' it seemed to him a conclusive argument against it. His conception of the virtues was the genuine Aristotelian one—a medium between two extremes. Not that he was a lukewarm partisan on all subjects; but of the people he most disliked—and he was a really 'good hater' of some classes, Romanists for instance, and Frenchmen, and Southern slaveholders—he could not bring himself to take any unfair advantage. Now it is no news to any one who knows anything of the Americans, that they are a nation of violent extremes; the different political parties, theological sects, geographical divisions—the literati of different cities even,—vituperate and assail one another fearfully, hardly respecting the laws of the land, much less the principles of natural

justice. Add to all this, that Carl had a naturally elegant and fastidious taste, certain to make him aristocratic in sentiment, however democratic he might be in principle, and it will be seen that he had a tolerable stock of incompatibilities to start with before having anything to do with England.

But, as if to settle his business completely, and prevent him from ever becoming a contented and contenting citizen of his own country, it chanced that just at the period of his youth, when, according to the wont of Young America, dress and billiards formed the main topic of his conversation, and he was aspiring to the possession of a fast trotter, accident took him to England, and a series of accidents kept him there, and caused him to make it his home for several years, and his standpoint for all his continental excursions. He grew up to mature manhood among and along with a generation of Englishmen. He acquired a taste for classical studies, and for that literary society, and those habits of literary and ethical criticism which are nowhere else found in such perfection. His life had always been strictly, even prudishly moral; and while casting off the frivolities and fopperies of his boyhood, he also parted with much of the impulsive and imperfectly understood religion of his younger days, and replaced it by a more sedate and permanent feeling, which never rose to ecstasy of emotion, but was always present to him as a daily habit, and was deeply earnest, with little outward show.

Such a man's tendencies were visibly towards the Church; and had Carl been an Englishman, or continued his sojourn in England, he would have taken orders naturally and inevitably, and might have made a tolerable parson. But at home he soon found it impossible to assimilate himself to that Evangelical party which

constitutes the great bulk of the American religious community.

The three leading tendencies of his character already alluded to, fostered as they were by his residence abroad, had ended by making him very eclectic and very unconventional. He took what seemed good to him from every quarter, without reference to antecedents; and the fact that all the world about him were going one way, was just the reason to make him go the other. The Puritan denunciations of all who differed from them on points of transcendental theology, or of social institutions, seemed to him illiberal and uncharitable. His religion acted upon him somewhat like the Socratic Daemon; it restrained him from actions, rather than prompted him to them. He abhorred all parade of godliness, and shrunk from disclosing his religious experiences, as he would have done from disclosing his loves, to a mixed assemblage. There were many things about these people besides their abhorrence of the fine arts, that shocked his æsthetic sensibility, and their inquisitive censoriousness he deemed ungentlemanly in point of manners, and little short of persecution in point of principle. What most of all repelled him was their unmitigated 'seriousness.' A certain notorious personage, whom it is no scandal to call the greatest of living charlatans, is reported to have taken for his motto (literally *taken*, and half spoiled in the appropriation, from a Bishop of old), 'Praise God, and be merry.' Now this was exactly what Carl wanted to do, to praise God, and be merry; and he did not think the latter clause of the device implied any necessary incompatibility with the former. He held strongly to the '*neque semper arcum*,' and thought that a man was all the better man, and better Christian, for an occasional season of healthy enjoy-

ment. He did not think 'teetotalism' necessary to prevent gentlemen from becoming drunkards, and he took his regular exercise on Sunday as well as on other days. His sincere nature revolted equally from the idea of dissembling a merriment which he felt, and from that of simulating a religious enthusiasm which he did not feel. With all personal respect for such men, and all reverence for the service they had done to the cause of vital religion, and civil, no less than religious liberty, he very soon found that he could not amalgamate with them, and gave up all intention of going into the church. Thus it came to pass, that letting himself slide into the place which his fortune and connexions had marked out for him, he became a man of society, and a gentleman of the world. It proved that he was not entirely free from the national error of quitting one extreme for another; it could only be said in his defence that his new *rôle* rather came to, than was sought for by him. Perhaps his fastidiousness partly led him into it; but this trait of his mind showed itself more in intellectual criticism than in material Sybaritism, and more in the choice of companions than either. Certainly he had no great qualifications for the part, especially in New-York, and very wild work he made of it with his peculiar ideas, some of which were rather English, and all of which were considerably the reverse of American.

The first offence that Carl gave was by getting married in church as quietly as anything can be done in New-York, and going out of the way immediatly afterwards, instead of standing his bride up for eight hundred people to look at. He was shamefully negligent of his duties to society in not having given 'a reception.' Carl said that he married for the present happiness and future comfort of himself and his wife, not for the amusement of

society; and that was all the explanation he deigned to give his fashionable acquaintances.

His next eccentricity was refusing to read *The Sewer*, to let it enter his house, or to talk about it. He said, that in Europe, scandalous newspapers were not taken in by respectable families, that even young men read them at their clubs, and by stealth, and never mentioned them before ladies; that people making pretensions to superior morality and decency ought not to patronize an immoral and blasphemous print—and more to the same effect. Men and women who referred to France as the standard of half the things they did, taunted him with referring to England. Benson did not think it worth while to discuss the merits of that case, but answered by a quotation from Aristophanes, how 'clever folks learn many things from their enemies,'—which he had to translate before his auditors understood it,—and by another of like purport from a Latin hard, which they were less slow to comprehend, as it has become part of the stock in trade of our public speakers, and even the editors know what it means. Then one man liked *The Sewer* because it had the best reports of trotting matches; and another, because it published the news from Washington half-an-hour sooner than any of its contemporaries; and they all said, that all the papers were so bad, it was merely a question of degree, and not of kind. Nobody agreed with Carl, not even the people who were abused by *The Sewer*, and he made no converts out of his own family—his wife, brother, and sister.

But his great crime was blaspheming the polka, for which I believe Young New-York thought him absolutely insane, and would gladly have put him into a strait-jacket. He thought that a *matinée* which lasted from noon to midnight was an absurd and wicked waste

of time; that even six hours a day was too much for a reasonable being to devote to the redowa; that at a ball or party there should be some place for people who like to converse, and a non-dancing man should not be stuck into a corner all the evening on pain of being knocked over by the waltzers; that the tipsy excesses of the young gentlemen who lorded in the ball-room rendered their society not the most edifying for ladies; and as whatever he thought he gave utterance to in pretty plain language, he made himself prodigiously unpopular, and was a great nuisance to the exclusives.

On the other hand he found things enough to annoy him. He had no like-minded, and it seemed no *like-bodied* men to associate with; no gentlemen to converse with on classical subjects, no acquaintances to join him in his long walks and drives. He was not over fond of the French. 'They made the best coffee and gloves in the world,' he used to say, 'but coffee and gloves, after all, are a very small part of life.' Therefore it was irksome to him to hear the French always appealed to as the standard of dress, furniture, and manners. Above all, it worried him to find their language the recognized one of the *salon* and the opera. That two or three persons, whose native tongue was English, should go on talking imperfect French (for the knowledge acquired by a two years' residence in Paris must be comparatively imperfect), though no foreigners were present, struck him as a mischievous absurdity, and directly calculated to hinder mental growth. But all these were petty troubles compared to the misery he endured from the gossiping and scandalous propensities of his fashionable acquaintance. He now found his error in supposing that there is any peculiar illiberality and uncharitableness in a religious community, as distinguished from a worldly one; and

discovered, that in avoiding the Evangelical connexion, he had not escaped the spirit of inquisitive censoriousness. A common error of young men is this: they fancy that because people of the world talk of their liberality, and parade it ostentatiously, they must possess an extra share of it. And doubtless they are more charitable towards their favourite propensities; the 'jolly good fellow' will judge leniently of his bottle companion's trippings, and so on through the calendar of vices: though even this proposition is not to be received absolutely. Cataline will sometimes be found complaining of sedition; most offenders have some lingering sense remaining of original right and wrong; not enough to keep them straight, but enough to blame others for the self-same obliquities. But to try the question correctly, we should examine the worldly, not in their judgments of one another, but in their judgments of the religious, and see how much liberality they show them. We should watch the hatred of virtue and purity, and the envy of fair fame, developing themselves in every form of slander and detraction, from the sly inuendo to the open falsehood. All merely fashionable society has a necessary tendency to be scandalous; fashionable people must talk a great deal without any definite purpose, and personal topics are always the readiest at hand for small talk, in a momentary dearth of others—this one's dress and appearance—that one's style of living—who is attentive to whom—and so on; so that besides the gossip which springs from deliberate wickedness, there is a great deal that is the result of mere thoughtlessness and vacuity. And New-York fashionable society is probably more scandalous than any other, because there are fewer public amusements for persons of leisure than in the continental cities of Europe, while the men have not that vent in political

life, or the women in out-door exercise, which Londoners find.

Now Carl was imbued with the idea (I believe it was one of his acquired English ones) that the first duty of a gentleman is to mind his own business. He had a horror of interfering with any one's private affairs, and an equal horror of any one interfering with his. It sickened him, therefore, to be among people who were always speaking ill of one another, and fetching and carrying stories. He grew tired of every one in the not very large circle of his acquaintance, which his fastidiousness, before adverted to, had always kept small; for he hated immoral people, and had a very imperfect sympathy for vulgar ones; and the man who begins by excluding these two classes, will make a large hole in his visiting list. He was in danger of becoming morbid and misanthropic. The natural and proper resource for a person so situated, is to take up some active and steady occupation—ride some hobby, if he can do nothing better,—at any rate, give himself enough to do. Carl was not a man of hobbies, and all the available ones were ridden to death already. The first resort of a young Englishman, with good fortune and connexions, is politics: it is the very last resort of a New-Yorker similarly situated. He usually has enough of it at college; is a violent politician at sixteen, and by nineteen gives up all thoughts of shining in that way. *Why* this is so, I will not stop to explain at present, as I have no intention of writing a treatise *à la de Tocqueville* on the working of democratic institutions in America. I only mention the fact; perhaps you will find some further light thrown on it before we get to the end of this paper.

Two refuges lay open before him—business and lit-

erature. 'Business'—banking, or commerce of some sort, is the shortest way for a New-Yorker to dispose of himself; but Carl had neither taste nor ability for trading or finance, and was too frank and unsuspecting to make his way profitably in a very sharp mercantile community. To literature his ideas naturally turned; and in some countries a productive literary life might have been his happy destiny. He was not necessitated to write for a livelihood, and was just the sort of man to write for reputation. It was the occupation for which his tastes and his education fitted him.

But he had been too well educated for an American *littérateur*. His standard of excellence was pitched too high. The popular novels provoked his criticism, not his emulation. The exaggerated flattery of newspaper puffs, and the little Peddlingtonism of sectional cliques disgusted him. He would not toady others, and disliked being toadied himself. He had too correct an appreciation of newspaper editors, and too much candour to disguise this appreciation. His accurate taste was shocked by little mechanical deficiencies—the carelessness of compositors and proof readers—the impossibility of getting a Greek quotation set up correctly. He wrote for elegantly and thoroughly educated men, such as had been the associates of his youth, and found few of his countrymen to read, and fewer to understand him; consequently, after a brief experience, he gave up all writing for publication except one species of authorship, which had only a semblance of doing others any good, and which did himself a great deal of harm.

This was the controversial and satirical, to which he was prompted by an honest abhorrence of shams, and in which he was encouraged by the morbid public appetite for anything savouring of personality or approaching to

a 'row' upon paper. Carl had a knack of saying disagreeable things in a disagreeable way, with some point and smartness—was clever in prose parody, in the *reductio ad absurdum*, in quoting a man against himself, —in short, up to all the 'dodges' of belligerent criticism, and had a lively sense and keen perception of the ridiculous; but not priding himself as a gentleman and a Christian on these accomplishments, he did his best to keep them down, just as he did to keep down any tendency to say ill-natured things in social intercourse, and only gave them play when provoked by any flagrant exhibition of imposture. But having once found by experiment how this sort of writing took, how an hour's ebullition of sarcasm would command attention when two months of research and polish were unheeded, and having no lack of material to tempt him, he was seduced into it again and again. If a sciolist undertook to put forth a new theory of the Platonic philosophy without having mastered his Greek Grammar, Carl Benson was at hand to turn him inside out, and show up his pretensions. If a demagogue took up the formulas and watchwords of other times and countries, to malign his betters, and stir up one class against another, Carl was the first to dissent from the popular voice of panegyric, and demonstrate in plain terms what mischievous nonsense the lecturer had been uttering. If a radical magazine blazoned out the discovery of some prodigious mare's nest—some awful conspiracy of England against American liberty or letters, who was so ready as Carl to point out that the editor could not spell the most ordinary foreign name straight, and did not exactly know the difference between *Fraser* and the *Edinburgh?* Booksellers and periodicals were glad enough to publish these squibs, and the reading public read them fast enough, with con-

siderable amusement, and no profit or intention of profiting by them; it was *parvis componere magna*, like Aristophanes and Cleon; the bystanders cheered the exposer, and followed the exposed as fast as ever. Carl began to set up for a professed satirist—one of the worst things that can befall a man, for the benefit he confers on others is very problematical, and the evil he inflicts on himself positive and inevitable.

He who had been the merriest of young men found himself growing ill-natured and morbid when he should have been in the prime of life. It was hard to say which he disliked most, the exclusives or the democracy, and he uttered his mind about both pretty freely. He was sick of the newspapers, with their bad print and worse principles—of the endless debates about the same old questions in Congress—of literary pretenders, and the thousand and one 'most remarkable men among us,' —of all the continuously succeeding popular delusions; of the gossiping young men in illimitable cravats, and all the personal intelligence about Mr. Brown and Miss Jones. Still he clung to old Gotham for a reason that influenced few people in it. He had strong conservative feelings and local attachments; his childhood (unlike his brother's) had been spent in the city, and the scenes of his childhood were dear to him, however little interest he might feel in the new characters that peopled them. But when in the rapid march of 'up-town' progress, the house which his father built, where his parents had died, and he and his brother and sister played as children, became so surrounded by shops and stores, and manufactories, that he was fairly driven out of it, then he withdrew from the city altogether, and established himself for all the year round at his—that is to say, at his wife's —place on the Hudson His contemporaries speedily

forgot him, or if they ever thought of him, it was only as an unhappy recluse, Bellerophon-like, eating his own heart, and shunning the ways of men.

He was nothing of the sort. In quitting the town, he quitted most of his sources of discontent. He had great capacity of self-amusement when fairly left to himself, and could always find interesting occupation in his library. He now reaped the fruit of his early studies, though not exactly in the way he had once hoped and anticipated. His place, too, amused him greatly, and not keeping up two establishments, he had money in abundance to spend on it. He revelled in out-of-door exercise; it was a constant pleasure to him to gallop his blood mare (a taste for horses ran in the family) over fresh grass, where there were no omnibuses or fast trotters in his way. Nor was he without society; those who are unpopular with the majority can generally boast of a few of the warmest personal friends, and it was so in his case. They came to visit him by intervals and relays,—real worthies of literature, who had been his father's friends before they were his,—quiet men of general tastes and accomplishments like Philip Van Horne; now and then a like-minded stranger, such as Ashburner, or his sister and her husband, a good-natured, gentlemanly ornamental Philadelphian; or his brother Harry. But most of all was he happy in his family circle; a man of the warmest domestic affections, he rejoiced in the society of his children and the cheering presence of his wife. We owe this lady an apology for not bringing her forward sooner: it would have been more in accordance with the grammar of gallantry to 'put the more worthy person first.' And yet, reader, may it not be better to keep the good wine till the last, and after telling you a great deal about a man whom you may not like, then

to tell you something about a woman whom you must, or, at least, you ought to like? So let me present you to Mrs. Carl Benson.

Henry Benson used to say that Carl had carried out his eclectic principles in the choice of his wife, for she was something between a blonde and a brunette, and had dark eyes and light hair. She was a tall woman (according to the American standard of female height—I am not sure that she would have been considered so in England), and her figure rose up straight and springy as a reed. Altogether, she was in beautiful preservation, which is more than can be said for every American woman who has mounted into 'the thirties,' and is the mother of three children. Her shoulders were magnificent, her bust good, her arms and hands exquisitely moulded, her feet and ankles neatly turned, her features regular, yet not wanting in expression, and her complexion almost perfect. Still, with all these elements of beauty, and though of good family (she was one of the Van Hornes), and sufficient worldly prospects, she had never been a great belle, and this was an additional charm in her husband's eyes, who would never have deeply loved a woman that all the world ran after. Indeed, she had not belle accomplishments or tastes, preferred singing English ballads to Italian arias, and galloping over the country all the morning to dancing at a ball all the night. And she was so insensible to the advantage of a cavalier *per se*, that she would rather talk to an amusing woman than to a stupid man, however handsome and fashionable. Of toilet mysteries she knew enough to keep her from dressing badly, but not enough to make her dress well and effectively. Her talents were not of the showy order, and did not fit her for shining in the *salon*. She had good (not extra-

ordinary) natural abilities, and had been beautifully 'coached,' first by her father, and afterwards by her husband, so that without any pedantry or *bas-blue*-ism she displayed an extensive acquaintance with literary topics, but she was not brilliant in small talk, in playful raillery, or cut-and-thrust repartee. When she was in Paris (as Miss Louisa Van Horne), the French could make nothing of her; they thought her a handsome bit of marble, cold, unimpassioned, and uninteresting. And when more lately Vincent Le Roi came, as Henry's *umbra*, to pass a few days at Ravenswood, the Vicomte went away saying that Madame Carl Benson was undoubtedly an angel, but, for his part, he didn't like angels; they were misty and insipid; he much preferred *les filles d'Eve*. And all who knew Le Roi agreed that he would not know well what to do with an angel. On the other hand, it must be set off against the deficiencies above mentioned, that she was a true and a loving wife, a fond mother, a benevolent lady, and a sincere Christian.

Such was—no, such was not the mistress of Ravenswood. I feel the attempted portrait is inadequate. A passing description cannot do justice to the woman any more than a passing interview. Her superficial blemishes—want of ease in her conversation, or of crinoline in her dress,—were obvious to the casual observer; but the sterling qualities of her character, her truth and honesty, her constancy of affection, her unworldly disposition, her loftiness of soul—all these, as they could only be properly appreciated by those who had known her for years, so can they only be generally and vaguely hinted at in a brief sketch like this. The great mystery was, how she came to marry Carl. Every one said she was too good for him, and he would have been the last man to deny it. Perhaps she was pleased with his simple

integrity, and foresaw that he would make a most affectionate husband, though it was not in his nature to be a passionate lover. Perhaps she pardoned his awkwardness in regard for his honesty. Perhaps it was one of the singular cases (occurring, however, so often in society that they can hardly be called singular) where a woman marries a man not half good enough for her, or, *vice versa*, without any one being able to explain why.

After all, I would not claim that she was morally perfect; very few of us are. I am afraid she was rather censorious, and judged harshly of sinners; that in her own comfortable position she did not always weigh accurately the temptations of others. It is a common practice of very good and moral people to indemnify themselves for their virtue by depreciation of others; 'tis an error that lurks at the heels of Christian duty; for are we not *commanded* to hate sin? and the transition from the abstract to the concrete is so easy.

I fancy, too, she did not harmonize altogether with Mrs. Henry Benson. Indeed, the two sisters-in-law made little secret of their mutual incompatibility. Clara said that Louisa was very proper and very stupid, regular as a machine, and with no fun or frolic in her—that the only man she ever had about her, her cousin Philip, was as dull as herself,—that she dressed badly, and talked bad French,—that she went to church in the morning, and gossiped in the afternoon, and was more charitable to the bodies of her inferiors than to the souls of her equals. Louisa looked down upon Clara as a worldly and frivolous little creature, who fostered her beauty to attract admirers, and worried her husband to death by her caprices; who wasted her time in dancing and flirting, and her money in Parisian nick-nacks, or in giving parties to people who did not care for her. In

short, the two ladies said many hard things of each other when separate, and were painfully amiable when together.

But these bickerings did not greatly impair the happiness of our party at Ravenswood. The brothers loved each other as much as if they had *not* been brothers, and had not had to divide a large family estate between them. Even their wives' quarrels could not make them quarrel.

Many a jolly turn had they and their guest, lounging with their cigars after breakfast on the vine-trellised stoop, or under the spreading horse-chesnuts at one corner of the house, watching the white sails that glided by on the sunny water, and the fantastic cloudlets that floated in the clear sky; strolling through the winding walks, or across the terrace at evening, when the setting sun had piled red clouds like a huge volcano over the Hudson, and the Kaatskills looked like great blocks of lapis lazuli, their summits half veiled in fiery mist; riding through the adjacent country in bright moonlight nights, now treading their way among the uncertain bridle-paths of a dense wood, and anon startling a village with their clattering hoofs and boisterous merriment as they swept by it at full gallop; driving four-in-hand a live-long day to visit friends, who lived north or south of them on the rivers, by roads that rose up over the hills and showed all the glorious panorama of the Hudson, and then dipped down inland among picturesque glens and water-courses and mill-streams. Capital game breakfasts they had, which the women were not too sentimental to help them in doing justice to; and excellent plain dinners, with oceans of iced champagne; and when the cloth was drawn, Carl would chirp over his claret with as comfortable a melancholy as ever any 'ruined'

Protectionist gentleman in Old England gave utterance to.

At a very early period of their acquaintance, Henry Benson had put Ashburner up to the way of getting at the dark side of things in America. 'Never assail anything,' he said; 'if you do, the people will tackle you, from the highest to the lowest. *Let an American gentleman talk;* give him his head, and he will soon lead you on the track you want.' Acting on this hint, the Englishman let his host talk; what little he said himself would come in the form of a query or suggestion. 'You lead a very nice life here,' he would say, 'but it is rather quiet. I should think an active man like yourself would choose some more stirring form of existence.' Then Carl blazed out.

'Go into politics I suppose! A nice business that for an honest man and a gentleman! Why, Ashburner, the democracy of our State, who are always in fear of being reduced to vassalage by a few thousand easy and unambitious rich men, have lost their liberties without perceiving it to hundreds of thousands of alien settlers with their foreign priests. A successful politician here is either a hack lawyer of thirty years' standing, who has had opportunity enough of getting used to the devil's work in his first business, or an upstart demagogue, who has made his way by dint of sheer brass; either a blind partisan, who knows nothing outside of 'the regular ticket,' or a 'non-committal' man, who says everything to everybody, and never gave an intelligible, manly, straightforward opinion in his life. One party would sell us body and soul to the Slaveholders, and the other to the Anti-renters, and both to the Irish. If I could bring myself to enter the lists with such people, I should have to start with the dead weight of being a

'millionaire' (as they call every man here who has two or three hundred thousand dollars) and an 'aristocrat.' (as they call every man who has the habits and education of a gentleman). There is not a voter in this country that has less influence than I have:—to be sure, I don't try for any, because I well know that by doing so, I should only make myself more unpopular, without becoming any more influential. Or be a leader of fashion, perhaps—one of those people who talk scandal about one another all day long when they are not dancing, who try to pursue pleasure in a place where every one else is at work, and are so destitute of resources, that they quarrel for pure want of something to do. See what they have made of my brother, who is a clever fellow and a well-educated man, though I say it. He is becoming a third-rate dancer—one of Tom Edwards' *corps;* is growing frivolous and scandalous, and getting his earnest honesty knocked out of him every day. Or profess literature, possibly—Henry does a little of that too; you may see him in the magazines sandwiched between the last learned cobbler and the newest Laura Matilda of the West. No, I don't want to belong to any 'Mutual Admiration' Society, and if I did, it's too late now. My mind has been spoken so often and so freely, that were I to write a book as good as one of Fenimore Cooper's (if you can imagine the possibility of a thing even in hypothesis), no editor would notice it, and no one read it—unless it contained something personal. Here I shall stay and amuse myself in what one of our ex-great men used to call 'dignified retiracy;' and if this railroad drives me out, why then, *ingens iterabimus æquor*—to England, were I a bachelor, but my wife couldn't live there; no American woman can, after the attention she has been used to at home, except the ambassador's wife—so it will probably

be to Italy, or perhaps to Paris, for a man can find occupation there, whatever be his peculiar bent, and fill up his time well in the place without knowing or liking the people.'

'It does surprise me,' said Ashburner, 'that the terminus of a refined American's dream should always be Paris,—that whenever a man has means and leisure, he runs off thither, and stays as long as he can; and if not there, in some other place—anywhere but at home.'

'Come now,' broke in Henry Benson—he had retired with the ladies after dinner, and now rejoined the men to have some claret—'don't you English run over to Paris perpetually, and all round the continent? Don't we meet you everywhere in the four quarters of the globe? You don't like to stay at home any more than we do; only we are franker than you, and avow it.'

'We *go* away from home, but we don't like to *stay* away,' replied the Englishman.

'Exactly; and if we had a *pied à terre* close to the continent as you have, we should not like to stay away from home either—more than half the year. Here has Carl been making his moan to you about our unappreciated condition; it's always his way over the decanters—one of his amusements merely. (Carl, old fellow, pass the Lafitte this way.) Well, I think,' and he paused to fill a brimming glass, 'that we are very jolly victims; and for my part, I am quite disposed to play, regardless of my doom. Look at our wives and children, our houses and horses, our whole style of living. Ponder well on this *Bordeaux;* ruminate on these woodcocks we have been discussing. What miserable misused fellows we are! We *do* live in a great country—we have such civil and religious liberty as is enjoyed in only one other country in the world; and if we don't

have the management of the government, why no one here or abroad holds us responsible for what the government does, and that is just the condition Plato thought a philosopher should pray for. Fill up again, brother mine, and thank your stars that you have your time to yourself, and are not a parliament man, as Ashburner is going to be, and are not set to work twelve hours a day among blue books and red tape.'

And now, reader, these papers, which have been running on for a year or more, are wound up. I did not begin them intending to give you anything marvellous, or new, or profound about the aspect, prospects, and destiny, political, religious, or literary, of the great people among whom I am a small unit. I only intended to present you with some phases of outward life and manners—such things as would strike or interest a stranger in our beloved Gotham, and in the places to which regular Gothamites—American cockneys, so to speak—are wont to repair. For I am but a cockney in my own country; I have never travelled far in it,—good reason why, when they are apt to hang up a man at one end of the Union for what is a sort of religion at the other. They did not aspire to be 'Sketches of American Society' (that was an honorary prefix of yours, Mr. Editor), nor even Sketches of New-York Society, but only of a very small class of persons in New-York; and therefore I had originally headed them 'The Upper Ten Thousand,' in accordance with a phrase established by Mr. Willis, though even that is an exaggeration, for the people so designated are hardly as many hundreds. In truth, I began the series chiefly to amuse some Cantab friends of mine, who were curious to know how the

gentlemen that were their contemporaries and representatives in our atlantic cities, lived, and eat, and dressed, and amused themselves; what their habits and pursuits and propensities were. The last thing that I expected was that any of them should be read, much less republished on my side of the water. To a New-Yorker, many things which they contain must necessarily appear stale, stupid, and commonplace. For instance, in one number half a page is taken up with the description of a trotting-wagon; to an American I should as soon think of describing a pair of boots; the one is as familiar an object to him as the other. But at the very first number some clever folks took it into their heads that they were to be very personal,—that every character described or even alluded to in them was to represent a real living prototype; that was enough to make them sought after. And it really did happen that in that first number I had described a sleigh which actually existed in real wood and iron somewhere about the city; and the inference above detailed was obvious. It is not every story in Gotham that has so much foundation; in fact, they get them up frequently without any foundation to speak of, only unfortunately the narratives don't fall to the ground as readily as the houses do. It is hardly worth while contradicting such idle rumours, but to my American readers (since I have some, much to my own amazement) I wish to say one thing once for all—that Harry Benson is not meant to represent any living individual whatsoever, and that his wife, house, horses, and other accessories, are not designed after the corresponding appurtenances of any real person. And the same remark applies with equal force to all the appendages of Carl Benson, as delineated in this very sketch.

Still, I suppose I ought to be obliged to the members of 'our set' who got up this idea; for the factitious interest thus communicated to these papers has caused them to be reprinted (in the cheap and multitudinous style of American reprints), and thus to become known to the outsiders both of our own city and of other parts of the country, who could, perhaps, judge them more fairly on their own merits, from having no knowledge of, or interest in, the local celebrities supposed to be portrayed in them. Some have been disposed to accept them as what they were really meant for—light sketches of life and manners in a certain circle; some have had the bad taste to wax furious at them. I understand that a few southern editors have departed from their usual stoical calmness and dignified reserve on the subject, to assail me for my occasional allusions to 'the peculiar institution;' and am told (life is too short, and time too precious, to read such things oneself, but there are always good-natured friends to put you up to them) that a correspondent of the *Ochlocratic Review and No Government Advocate*, who probably never wore a decent coat in his life, and regards every man in a clean shirt as an oppressor of the people, has seriously taken me to task for representing some of my characters as elegantly dressed! If this individual could find nothing worse to say of my papers, *after nine months' examination of them*, methinks he might have continued to hold his tongue; but I suppose any trash will do for the *Ochlocratic*.

Whether the abuse of these persons, or the praise of others, or my own inclination, may tempt me hereafter to essay something more definite and connected, I will not say at present. Of the things that 'lie on the knees

of the Gods,' it becomes no man to speak prematurely. Meanwhile, make a long arm across the Atlantic—So—shake hands, and good-bye!

FRANK MANHATTAN.

THE END.

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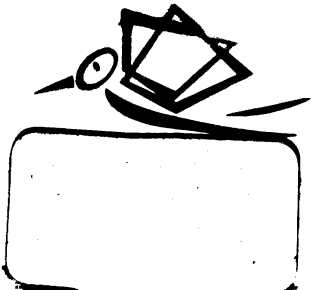
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